

THE FIVE CENT

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Highfalutin Jim.



After a brief but exciting round, Jim laid the bill-sticker out on the sidewalk; then, to the delight of his audience, piled the posters on top of him.

HIGHFALUTIN' JIM.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH JIM DOES HIS UNCLE SAM.

"THE fact is," said his uncle, "you're too highfalutin', Jim." Then pausing in his occupation, that of sawing a plank into strips, added: "I'd advise you to go to New York and find out what you're really worth."

Jim, a well-grown, sharp-featured, keen-eyed youth of eighteen, threw down his tools, and picking up his jacket, thrust his arms into it, observing:

"Uncle Sam, you don't know a good boy when you see one. Here I've been working and working for you for two years, keeping you in luxuries, and never so much as having a week's holiday, and now you up and tell me that I'm highfalutin'. Here I've been getting customer after customer for you, and literally scooping the stamps, and you never so much as thanked me; trade that, when I'm gone, will go, too, and yet you have the cheek to tell me I'm highfalutin'. Why, I'm the most modest, shy, retiring boy in the whole town. Ask anybody. I'm a regular model. I——" when Sam Baggs glanced up at his nephew, and, uttering a dry chuckle, quietly remarked:

"Oh, go West, young man, go West."

"Stiffen me if I do," snapped Jim. "I'm going East; I know if I can only reach New York I can make my blessed fortune. They want some new blood there, that's what's the matter. Half a dozen smart young fellers, like me, would warm up some of them old foggy rich men, and make 'em shell out, spread themselves;" then pausing, looked saucily at his relation, and coolly observed: "Say, uncle, lend me twenty-five dollars until I can make a strike!"

"Why don't you ask for fifty?" chuckled his relative, ceasing his occupation and resting upon his saw.

"Hand 'em over," quietly replied the boy. "It will be a good investment for you, Uncle Sam, better than puttin' your money in that old bank;" with which he held out his hand and winked at the old man, who, winking back, slowly drew a handful of change from his pocket, then, counting out fifty cents, offered them to our hero, who glanced smilingly at him, saying: "See here now, uncle, do I look like a boy that would borrow fifty cents?"

"I know what you look like, Jim," grinned the old man. "That's all you'll get out of me."

"Uncle," he calmly observed, "I want to give you a chance in the world. I'd admire to see you get on. If ever I make a pile I'll send you a few thousands. There ain't nothin' mean about me; I model after poor Jim Fisk—he's my pattern. Jim went on to New York and interviewed the millionaires, an' they saw that he was smart and took him in partnership, an' I'm just goin' to lay myself out in the same style—see? Why, in a few years you'll be coming to me, in New York, an' saying: 'Jim, you'll say, 'put me on to a nice fat thing'—and—of course, I'll do it."

Then, giving another knowing wink, continued:

"Look here, Uncle Sam, add twenty-four dollars fifty cents to them pennies, an' I'll give you a note at sight, fifty per cent. interest. Come now—take another thought and pony up the spondulix. I want to start on your capital, so's I can build you up by-an'-by."

"Highfalutin' right clear up to the handle!" chuckled the carpenter, returning to his work. "Well, Jim, if it will carry any one through you'll do it."

"Do it!" ejaculated the boy, turning from him. "Why, I'm bound to do it, Uncle Sam. Look here; lend me twenty dollars, an' I'll give you fifty for it when I've seen a show to invest."

Sam once more inserted his saw in the wood, then, giving it a jerk, said:

"Yes, somehow; a derved funny how, too, it will be, mark me."

"Oh, pshaw!" cried his nephew. "It's no use talking to you. You're one of them folks who never can see anything under your nose. Uncle Sam, good-by! I wouldn't borrow ten dollars

of you, no, not if you was to go down on your knees, an' to beg of me to take 'em; stiffen me if I would."

The old man paused in his work, chuckled, drew forth a tobacco-pouch, in which he kept his bills, slowly counted ten dollars, and held them out to Jim, saying:

"I'll lend you that sum."

"What sum?" demanded our hero.

"Ten dollars," grinned his uncle.

"Ten!" cried Jim; "did you say ten dollars? My gracious, how will you feel, in reading my history, when you come to a paragraph like this:

'When he left home, his miserable old nipper of an uncle only gave him ten dollars!'" with which he reached out his hands and took the stamps, while Sam, who was knocked all of a heap with his cheek, gasped:

"Dern it! I knowed you'd take 'em."

"Come," smilingly continued Jim, "hand over the other fifteen, Uncle Sam. I mean to repay you handsomely for this. Just fancy how proud you'll be when the papers arrive here with accounts of my great doings in New York. Folks will say: 'Ain't you glad you gave him a liberal start in life?' You can tell 'em you lent me any amount you like. Now, haul out that old bag of yours, an' plank over the balance due me—hear? You'll never regret assisting your deserving young relative."

Old Sam chuckled, pulled forth his money, handed Jim the amount he asked for, shook his fist at him, and remarked:

"You derved, highfalutin' young rascal, go an' make your everlasting fortune, or—bust!" when Jim calmly pocketed the money, shook his relative warmly by the hand, and said:

"I knowed I'd fetch you somehow!"

CHAPTER II.

JIM PLAYS HIS OLD GAME ABOARD THE TRAIN.

JIM had a high old time bidding folks adieu. There was no "slink off by the back entrance" about him, and the boys were down at the depot to see him start.

Spite of his highfalutin' ways everybody liked him, and appeared sorry that he was going away.

Jim had been a champion base ball player, and the club would miss him, but he promised, when he had made his fortune, to send them gorgeous uniforms and solid silver prizes, to say nothing of getting them all situations on this line of railway; indeed, so big did he feel, that when he took his ticket, he told the clerk he might rely on him putting him in somewhere as a depot-master.

Presently up rushed the train, and Jim sprang on board, followed by a score of boys, who were bent on seeing him off.

Settling himself into a seat, he said:

"Well, good-by, fellers; you'll hear from me afore long. I'm going to look out for you, boys," then rattled on in his usual highfalutin' style, while the train started, carrying his friends with him, whereupon he said: "Oh, never mind, boys, I'll fix it with the conductor."

In a little while that official came along, and seeing the group clustered about him, said:

"Where are you boys going to?"

"Next depot—Carville," they replied.

"Twenty cents each," he demanded.

"Don't you pay, boys—don't you pay," quietly observed Jim; then turning to the conductor, said: "You started a minute before your time."

"I'll be darned if I did!" shouted the man.

"Stiffen me if you didn't!" calmly answered Jim. "You've got to do one of two things, stop the train or carry my friends free."

"Who are you on the half-shell?" snarled the man; "you travel on your shape, don't you?"

"I don't talk to conductors," said Jim, turning his back on him.

"What!" yelled the man. "You don't talk to conductors? Well, who the devil do you talk with, hey?"

"Oh, it's no use of your getting your back up,"

quietly replied our hero. "You'll hear more of this when we reach New York."

"I shall?" screamed the man, fairly foaming at the mouth with rage. "Look here, young fellow, I'd like to know your name."

"That won't do you any good," he returned.

"You've got to be sacked all the same."

"Sacked!" frantically yelled the conductor, who noticed that the rest of the passengers were laughing at him. "Who in the name of thunder will sack me? I've been on this train for fifteen years."

"Oh, that's a lie!" smilingly remarked Jim.

"The cars ain't that old."

The man hauled off and would have struck, but the boys prevented him, saying:

"Don't you touch him, conductor. He'll make you pay for it if you do."

"By the 'tarnel, will you tell me who you are?" snarled the man, who had never met with such a highfalutin' cuss as our hero.

"Me?" calmly answered the boy. "Me? Don't you know me?" then glancing around at his grinning chums, added: "Stiffen me if I sha'n't have to look into this man's record; he don't know me."

Just then the train slowed up, and the conductor shouted:

"Carville!"

"Well," smilingly observed Jim, as the laughing boys once more bade him good-by, "so-long, fellers; you'll have to walk eight miles home, but you must remember you've had the last of my company," with which he shook them by the hand and hurried them off.

As soon as the train started again the conductor re-entered the car, and after inspecting all the other passenger's tickets, said, surlily, to Jim:

"Come! your pasteboard, young man."

"Oh!" he quietly observed, "you here again? I thought that we were rid of you!"

"Who are you, young fellow, anyhow?" inquired the bewildered man. "I've had a good many big bugs travel with me but, by thunder, you top all!"

"Do you know Vanderbilt?" demanded the boy.

"No, not personally," said the other, while the passengers sniggered.

"Well! I, ahem! I'm going to New York to see him, private business; utmost importance; big thing! I don't want to hurt you, my friend, but a word from me will sack you!"

"Honest?" said the conductor.

"Yea!" nodded the boy. "You needn't give this away, as I don't want to be mobbed by a lot of office seekers."

"I understand!" civilly replied the conductor, rising. "You'll excuse my getting a little mad; my temper is a trifle snappy."

"Oh, don't think any more about it!" affably replied the boy. "I'll speak to old Van for you."

"Thankee!" answered the man. "Wouldn't you like a seat in the drawing-room car—nothing extra to pay?"

"Well, I guess I—will—take it," said Jim.

The conductor of the saloon vehicle handed him to a seat in a compartment, then chatted with him about the great Vanderbilt.

It's wonderful how a good thumping lie will tell with some folks, and before long Jim was spinning yarns about the commodore, while the conductor and steward listened with open mouths.

"I've got a pet plan," observed Jim, as the darkey politely brought him some ham and chicken sandwiches, and a bottle of ale. "I'm going to double all the salaries on this line, and to wipe out the opposition one. You'll have more to do, but your pay will be increased, and," here he lowered his voice, "I'll shorten your working hours;" then smiling on the grinning darkey, inquired: "How much for this lunch?"

"Nothin', from you, sah," replied the man. "Won't farget me, sah—my name 'Gustus Brown."

"And yours, sir?" inquired the conductor, when they neared New York.

"Mine!" calmly answered our hero, "my name

is Jim Bags, but I'm commonly called High falutin' Jim."

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH OUR HERO TAKES A FEW CARDS.

As may be imagined, the conductor felt very small; nobody likes being sold by a boy.

"Sucked in, hey?" calmly remarked Jim; adding, "never mind, my friends; I'll do you a good turn, if my name is Bags!" then, as the train ran into the Grand Central Depot, he alighted, nodded to the officials, and, presenting his check, obtained his valise; a small affair containing a suit of clothes and his under linen.

Taking a transfer coach he rode down town, and upon reaching the hotel, registered his name, with a flourish, as "H. J. Bags, of Bagsville;" then, noticing the plain cards in the box on the counter, said to the clerk:

"Are them free for the guests?"

"Ye-a," replied the man; "help yourself."

Taking a dozen or two of the cards he seized a pen and wrote in a copper-plate hand:

"HIGHFALUTIN' JIM BAGS,"

arranging them one over the other, like roofing-shingles, all along the counter, the clerk looking surlily on.

Presently the proprietor, a very red-faced, fleshy man, entered the office, and, noticing that Jim was using up all the plain cards, whispered to the clerk:

"Say, who's that fellow?"

Our hero heard this, and pausing in the act of flourishing a swan on a fresh card, nodded to the landlord, saying:

"Good-evening, old shad-belly! My name is Bags—Jim Bags—Highfalutin' Jim Bags."

"Here!" savagely returned the man, grabbing his hand, as he reached out to take the last plain card from the case, "just drop that. Them cards ain't put there to be used by wholesale."

"Oh, go an' change your suit!" laughingly replied the boy. "Who are you when you're at home?"

"I'm the landlord—b—b—blame you!" stut-tered the man. "Y—y—you just skoot out of this! I don't want any bummers staying in my hotel."

Turning to the enraged man, Jim calmly said: "Bummer! Do you mean to insinuate that I'm a bum?"

"Ye—yes," stut-tered the landlord. "No g—gentleman would take and use all the plain cards in our office. I sa—sa—say it again—you're a bummer, sir!"

"You heard that—and you heard that?" calmly inquired Jim of the two guests who had registered after him; then, turning again to the landlord, smilingly remarked: "That speech of yours will cost you ten thousand dollars."

"Who is he?" nervously inquired the old man of his clerk. "I have been twenty-nine years in the hotel business, but I never have been so grossly insulted."

"H. J. Bags," whispered the man, "from Bagsville."

Jim took the names of his witnesses, then ran on, in his usual highfalutin' style, saying:

"I came here on most important business with Commodore Vanderbilt. I'm young, of course, but I know how many blue beans make five. I mean to tell the commodore how I've been insulted in this hotel—I—when the clerk bent forward, and whispered to him:

"Step around into Mr. Coolwhites' private room; he wishes to speak with you, sir."

"I do not want any compromise," said Jim, in a loud tone; "I shall place this in my lawyer's hands. Now, sir, which is my room, or—do you refuse to accommodate me?"

"Number two, sir," whispered the clerk. "Bedroom and bath connecting. Ordinary charge, sir!" Then, dropping his voice still lower, added: "The commodore owns this property, sir."

"Very well," said Jim, "if I find things comfortable, I'll abandon my suit, if not"—here he helped himself to a few more cards which the clerk had placed in the stand. "I shall make old shad-belly hop for defaming my character! I'm Highfalutin' Jim Bags of Bagsville, and those who don't know me best learn!" Then pocketing the cards, turned to the hall-boy, observing: "Show me my room."

The apartment, a large one on the first floor, proved to be very comfortable, and Jim grinned as the boy left him.

"Nothin' like piling it on," he murmured. "Now I'll have some luncheon, smoke a cigar and rest. To-morrow I'll call on old Van, an' see if I can't wire him."

The next morning Jim arose about eight, breakfasted, and after smoking a cigarette, quit-tered the hotel, then proceeded to the commodore's office.

He was well-dressed, and had such a highfalutin', off-handed way with him, that no one suspected him of being poor.

"Commodore within?" he inquired of a clerk, who was casting up some long columns of figures.

The man nodded, then said:

"What do you want with him?"

"My name is Bags," coolly answered our hero, handing the clerk a card. "The commodore will see me, I know; tell him that I have important information concerning Erie."

"Can't you tell me what it is?" said the man. "The commodore is very busy."

"No," answered Jim, shaking his head. "I've come on to New York on purpose to see him, and I can't tell any one else my business."

The clerk glanced at Jim's card, then at him, whereupon the boy looked up at the office clock, then said:

"Be spry, young man; if I can't see the old boy I'm going down to Jay Gould; either one of the two will do me," hearing which the employee vanished, leaving Jim to look through the columns of a newspaper.

After a while the clerk returned, saying:

"The commodore will see you. Go right in."

Marching up to a mirror, the lad smoothed his hair, jerked up his shirt collar, and pulled down his vest, then, nodding to the clerk, observed:

"I knew the old man would see me," with which he opened the further door, and passed into a handsomely-furnished room where sat the commodore, who was busily engaged in opening letters.

"Well, young man," quietly inquired the millionaire, "what can I do for you, eh?"

Jim advanced, bowed, and softly said:

"Commodore, I knowed I'd fetch you some-how."

CHAPTER IV.

JIM OBTAINS A POSITION.

THE millionaire gave him a quick, searching glance, then inquired:

"Well, what have you to communicate about Erie?"

"Things are mixed, ain't they, on that line?" calmly began Jim. "You want a smart, active young man at the head of affairs, some one who can keep the fellers up to their work, eh?"

"Eh?" echoed the gentleman. "Who are you?"

"Jim Bags is my name," quietly returned our hero. "I have come on to New York expressly to offer my services to you. I—when the commodore turned sharply around, and fixing his piercing eyes upon the boy's face, ejaculated:

"Are you crazy?"

"Bless you, no," coolly answered Jim. "I'm in my senses. I believe in Jim Fisk, commodore; he came to this city quite poor, and rose from a small position to be a big-bug; now my name's Jim, I have brains, genius, energy."

"And cheek—cheek!" angrily interposed the gentleman. "I have met with a few highfalutin' individuals in my life, but, 'pon my honor, you cap all of them!"

Jim arose, and, bowing, said:

"Commodore, you do me too much honor; stiffen me if I ain't proud!" and, resuming his seat, added: "Well, what position can you give me?"

The great man eyed him for awhile, half vexed, yet amused with his audacity, then said: "Well, if I do what I ought to I shall ring for a policeman and have you marched out of my office; but I'll tell you what I'll do—I will give you an appointment as driver of a street-car."

"Now!" cried Jim.

"Driver of a street-car," somewhat wickedly repeated the old gentleman. "You seem to have plenty of push and nerve, so, if you really desire to work, I'll give you a chance," with which he resumed his occupation of opening letters.

"Stiffen me!" murmured Jim. "Driver of a street-car!" then, brightening up, arose, and, when the gentleman again glanced at him, said:

"I'll take it, sir. Thank you kindly."

The millionaire smiled, and wrote on a scrap of paper:

"MR. ———,"

"SUP. ——— AVENUE R. R.—Please employ this young man as night driver. C. V."

Then handed it to Jim and nodded for him to retire.

As he left the apartment, our hero muttered:

"Dern it, thought he'd give me a position on a railroad, but anyhow I've fetched him," then, nodding to the clerk, sauntered out of the building and made his way down to the office of the street railroad.

"Well," growled the superintendent, as Jim handed him the note, "what's this for?"

"Read it and you'll find out," quietly answered the boy.

The official perused it, then said:

"Do you know New York?"

"Well, I can soon learn," smilingly replied the lad.

"Can you fight?" demanded the other.

Jim measured him with his eyes, then grinned and said:

"Well, I can lick any feller of my own size, but I guess you could knock the sawdust out of me."

This put the superintendent into a good humor, so he observed:

"Well, my lad, you can come here at seven o'clock to-night and I'll put you on. It's rough work the line I'm going to give you, but it's a start for you."

"What's the pay?" asked Jim.

"Eight dollars a week; hours from eight P.M. to seven A.M." answered the official.

"Not for Jim, stiffen me!" quickly returned our hero; then quitting the place, made his way down town, murmuring: "Fact is, the old man was afraid to take me into his office; knowed I should learn too much. I'll try Astor."

After inquiring around for a while he found that the great property owner had an office down town, so, jumping on a street-car, he proceeded to wait upon him. In due time he reached the place, and entering, beheld a tall, surly-looking man, who, glancing up, growled:

"Well, what is it?"

"Do you want a smart young man to collect rents?" said Jim, as civil as you please.

"No," snarled the millionaire, "I don't."

"You don't," grinned the boy. "You ain't joking?"

"No," growled the gentleman. "Get out of this."

Jim smiled, although he felt mad at being treated so uncivilly, then said:

"Do you want to buy a house an' lot on Fifth avenue cheap?"

"Eh?" demanded the millionaire.

"Property worth a hundred thousand dollars," calmly continued the scamp, "to be sold for twenty-five thou—hey?"

"Where is it situated?" snarled the other.

"In my eye," said Jim, making for the door, and dodging to avoid a ruler that came flying at his head.

As he rushed from the place he ran butt up against a fat German gentleman, who was calling to pay his rent.

"Mein Gott!" gasped the man, as he landed upon his stern on the sidewalk. "Vere you goin', hey?"

"I've been to see some of the New York big-bugs," said the boy, as he assisted him to arise, "but stiffen me if I don't find 'em harder than Uncle Sam;" then patting him on the back, added, "go right in, Mr. Man, you'll find the boss in a very amiable frame of mind," with which he walked off, leaving the German rubbing himself and saying:

"Vell, in mine country, ven a poy knocks a man down he pegs his bardon, put dese Amerikin poys, mein Gott, dey is more like mens. I s'pose dey call deir vays highfalutin'."

CHAPTER V.

IN THE WAFFLE BUSINESS.

JIM walked back to his hotel, feeling utterly disgusted with New York millionaires.

"Dern 'em," he mused. "They haven't any sense. They can't see how smart I am. Here I am with talent in me running to waste, and them fellers rotten with money an' won't help me," saying which, he ordered dinner, then paid his bill, and leaving his valise to be sent for, started to find a cheap lodging.

He had twelve dollars left, so, after obtaining a room, he cast around for some employment.

It must not be imagined that his non-success had dampened his ardor; far from that, as he said:

"The world has got to give me a living, and you bet I'll get it."

Sauntering around by the new post office, he saw a Chinaman making and selling waffles, and as it was about noon, the articles went off "like buttered beans."

When business slackened a little, he approached the man, saying:

CHAPTER VI.

NOTHING DAUNTED, JIM GOES AT IT AGAIN.

NOT only was the one bill spurious, but it turned out that all the money he had received from the Chinaman was bogus.

"This is a derved long way off from being a millionaire," he sighed, as he tore the stuff up. "It's sold me, but it sha'n't fool any other honest boy," then walked to his lodging muttering:

"Jim, it's in you, me son, yer bound to fetch 'em, somehow. Turn agin, Jim Bags, turn agin, Highfalutin, thrice President of the United States," with which he drew forth his money and counted out four dollars and thirteen cents.

On reaching the house, his landlord said to him:

"Do you want a job, young man?"

"Ye-a," he grinned, "anything from digging a grave to building a church. What is it, mister?"

"Well, yer see," said the man, "my boss has started a new sort of stage, called the Broadway omnibus; nice, handsome vehicles, grey horses, and a man behind to take fares and blow a horn. Now, the drivers of these conveyances have been threatened for wearing a uniform, as the stage-drivers say it is unprofessional. It's a fight between the new omnibus and the old stage folks, and we want good, active, smart young men to act as drivers."

"What's the screw?" demanded Jim.

"Twenty-four dollars a week—no Sunday work—and find you in uniform!" answered the man.

"Big pay, ain't it?"

"Well, yes," said the boy; "is there a chance for a feller?"

"Certainly," replied the man. "Come right along with me and I'll get you a posish right away—that is, if you can drive."

"I drove a milk wagon all of one season," said Jim, with a chuckle, remembering how he had finally landed wagon, cans and horse in a canal; but, having made up his mind to stick at nothing, was determined to try his hand at any and everything that came in his way.

In a short time they arrived at a big stable, at the door of which several policeman were stationed, while hanging around, and watching every one who went in, was a number of Broadway and Fifth avenue stage-drivers.

"Are ye goin' to engage yerself?" demanded one of them, as Jim smilingly passed the group.

"Don't notice 'em," whispered his friend. As he spoke one of the new vehicles was driven up by a policeman, while two other cops, inside, were supporting the wounded forms of the late driver and conductor.

"That's how you'll be served!" yelled the watchers to our hero.

Entering the stable with the vehicle, Jim was taken to the proprietor, a tall, determined-looking man, who said to him:

"Well, if you are prepared to fight your way, I'll take you!"

"Look here, mister!" said the boy, "if you leave it to me, I'll run your line without any trouble—just give me a swivel gun on the top of my omnibus, an' a pair of revolvers to wear in my belt, an' you bet they won't touch me."

"But the police won't allow me to arm my men," observed the boss. "All these stage-drivers, who are doing this, are armed, yet my boys musn't even carry a knife!"

"Le'me speak with you privately, mister," winked Jim, and soon they were talking together in the proprietor's room.

"But," laughingly remarked the man, "they'll shoot you!"

"Put me in a suit of steel armor an' they can't!" grinned the boy. "See here, if you cover my body an' put a sheet iron apron over my legs, an' let me wear a helmet, I'll chance their hitting my arms!"

"And the squirt you spoke about?" smilingly inquired the man.

"Fill it with rotten eggs, an' give me a box of 'em to use in clearin' the way," grinned Jim.

"We're bound to fetch 'em somehow!"

"Well, you shall try it," said the proprietor. "I don't intend to allow the owners of the Broadway and Fifth avenue stage lines to run me off. What did you say your name is?"

"Jim Bags," replied our hero. "Highfalutin Jim. I tell you I'm just the rooster tew drive your omnibus for yer, mister. I'm a crack base ball pitcher, an' if any of them stage-drivers gets in my way, I'll ear-hole 'em with a rotten egg, jes's sure as you live. You put a band of music in my omnibus to-morrow, and start me out ahead of the line, an' I'll show the boys the way down Broadway. This biz just suits me. I was made for it. I feel it in my bones, mister."

"Talk enough," said the other, and Jim was engaged from that moment.

The balance of the day was taken up in hunting armor for his head and neck, and in fixing an iron apron to the omnibus.

The next morning, at seven o'clock, Jim mounted to the driving-seat, and slinging a big pewter squirt over his shoulder, secured it across his back, nozzle down, then received a box of rotten eggs, which he strapped on the seat by his side, after which, taking the reins, he cried:

"All ready. Hurry up the band."

The musicians, all Germans, took their places inside the omnibus, then struck up "Walking Down Broadway," whereupon Jim started his team and drove out on to the road.

He was certainly a comical-looking cuss.

On his head was a solid steel helmet, with the vizor down, surrounded by a bunch of small American flags, in lieu of a plume; about his neck was a solid gorget, also of steel, while his body was locked in stout, wrought steel armor, across which was pasted a notice, as follows:

FROM

CHARLES DRAKE'S

Old Curiosity Shop.

The whole turn-out being enlivened with his scarlet sleeves and a placard on the iron apron, running:

HIGHFALUTIN' JIM BAGS

DARES ANY

FIFTH AVENUE OR BROADWAY DRIVER

TO STOP HIM

UP OR

DOWN.

Giving his horses their heads, Jim swept proudly on, while the omnibusses behind him were soon filled, as they only charged five cents per passenger, while the stages demanded ten.

"Come along," cried the boy. "Follow Highfalutin' Jim."

CHAPTER VII.

OUR HERO ORGANIZES A BENEFIT.

JIM sat as proudly on his seat as a knight at a tournament, muttering to himself:

"Now it ain't every feller who could think of such a thing as this," when suddenly a stage drew right across the road and the driver, glancing at him, said:

"Hello, you derved Judas. So you've got on an ironclad suit, hey! Yar, you bummer, you just wait."

Reining in his horses, so as to avoid a collision, our hero drew an egg from the box by his side, and taking good aim, landed it in the fellow's eye, then followed up with another and another.

By that time, as though by pre-arrangement, a dozen stages drove up and formed a jam, filling the roadway.

Jim saw that they meant fight.

Drawing a revolver, one of the drivers said with an oath.

"D—n you, go back!"

"Not a derved inch!" shouted Jim, unslinging his squirt and leveling it at the speaker; "take that!" with which he let drive a stream of rotten egg, playing it all round over the now savage drivers.

This was a signal for a general attack upon him, and the pistol balls "pinged" about his ears and struck his armor, while the stage horses, left to themselves, started off down town at a gallop.

Guiding his steeds with his left hand, Jim served out the eggs with his right, and soon silenced his foes. Then, bidding the bandsmen, who, during the fight, had crouched on the floor of the vehicle, "rise and blow up," he flourished his whip and quickly left the opposition behind.

On reaching the South Ferry he had another scrimmage with some of the rowdies paid to attack him; but he served out the eggs so quickly that they fled, leaving him master of the situation.

Unfortunately for Jim, the proprietor soon spent all his money, so within a week the business bust.

"No salary?" inquired our hero, as he presented himself at the office.

"No," said the man. "My creditors have seized all my property. I haven't a cent."

"Well—that's a sell for me," said Jim. Then, after pausing awhile, observed: "Look here, mister, when a theater busts the actors gets up a

"You speak English, John?"

The fellow nodded.

"What will you sell out for?" he inquired.

The Chinaman thought awhile, then said:

"Ten dollars. Belly good place, dis."

"Show me how to make the things, an' I'll buy you out," said the boy.

The man smiled a smile that was child-like and bland, then instructed him in the art of waffle making, which Jim soon learned.

When he could turn out a nicely-browned waffle, he paid over his money and took possession of the stand, saying:

"Now this place is mine, un'stan'?"

"All life," grinned the Chinaman. "Me name Sam-Chow—me number one man—me no shete you," then, once more smiling, withdrew.

Jim cooked a pile of waffles, but somehow nobody bought them, so, about six o'clock he shouldered his traps and marched off to his lodgings.

"Dern it," he thought, "everybody must have a beginning. I don't care. I'd jes' as soon make a million out of waffles as on a railway. Some of them rich fellers will feel bad when I drive past 'em on Broadway," with which he made his supper of cold cakes, then turned in.

Bright and early the next morning he shouldered his portable restaurant, and in due time reached his pitch, where he arranged everything to do a roaring trade.

As he was clever the boys came along and bought of him, and he felt good; however, just as business began to be rushing, Sam-Chow came up with a duplicate of his cooking arrangement, and set up right alongside of him.

"See here, dern you!" he cried, as the Chinaman calmly proceeded to mix a wash boiler full of batter. "You just go somewhere else," whereupon the celestial saucily replied:

"Me see you tam firs'."

"You won't?" shouted Jim, turning to a crowd of newsboys, who had collected in order to see the fun. "Gol dern you, I'll make you."

Sam-Chow shrugged his shoulders and stirred away at his mixture, saying: "You buyee my stan', you payee me ten dolla'; s'pose you no like me come here; me telee you I will."

This made Jim real mad, and hauling off his coat and vest he let the Chinaman have it under the ear, upon which the heathen up with his foot and kicked him in the stomach.

"Go it, waffles," shouted the crowd. "Don't let a dern Chinaman whip you!" whereupon they gathered around and began to hustle the heathen, who was glowering at Jim like a mad dog.

Removing his coat, our hero sailed into his opponent, giving him several tremendous blows, while the Chinaman danced around, and kicked and slapped Jim's face.

This sort of game tickled the boys, but Jim didn't see the force of giving a free circus; so, gathering himself together, he sprang upon the heathen, grabbed his tail, and getting it around his wrist and firmly held in his hand, yanked him backwards; then, grasping him by one limb, lifted the fellow from the ground, and threw him head first into the wash-boiler of waffle mixture.

Rising, with the tin upon his head, the Chinaman drew a big knife and slashed around with it, until Jim struck it out of his hand.

"Here—what's this racket about?" demanded a cop, rushing in between them.

Jim explained that he had bought the stand, and that the Chinaman had sassed and cheated him, so the officer ran Sam-Chow in, our hero following and lodging his complaint.

The justice sent the Chinaman up for seven days, and warned him not to touch him again.

Returning to his pitch, the boy resumed business, and did very well, but soon discovered that he could not make his fortune at selling waffles.

Towards the afternoon a Chinaman came along, and, after watching him awhile, said:

"How muchee you wantee for your stan'?"

"Twenty dollars," replied Jim. "I bought it of one of your countrymen."

The man paid over the money, then took possession, leaving Jim once more free from the cares of business.

Entering a lager beer saloon, he called for a stein of beer, presenting one of the bills he had just received in payment.

"Counterfeit," said the barman; "where did you get it?"

"From a derved Chinaman," said Jim, rushing back to where he had left the man, but the fellow had vanished.

"Stiffen me," growled Jim, "if that slink-eyed cuss ain't sold me. It's I who have been fetched this time, dern it."

benefit for themselves. "You have the hosses an' omnibuses here—le'me get up a benefit?"

After consulting awhile with his creditors, the man consented, and that morning, Jim, in his ordinary red livery, drove down Broadway, his omnibus being decorated with a placard, marked as follows:

"GRAND BENEVOLENT EXCURSION,

UP AND DOWN BROADWAY,

Five Cents!

HIGHFALUTIN' JIM BAGS,

Who has lost his all

BY THE BUSTING OF THIS COMPANY."

He soon picked up a big load, and as he had no desire to go near the stable and share his receipts, he worked from South Ferry to Fiftieth street, hiring a change of horses each trip.

At eight o'clock he drove wearily into the omnibus stables, where a number of drivers and conductors were awaiting his arrival.

They had been told by the late proprietor that Jim had taken out a team in order to try and earn something with which to pay them, so they expected him to divide up.

"How much did you scoop in, Jimmy?" inquired one of the crowd, as the boy began to count a pocketfull of nickles and small stamps. "Done well for us, eh?"

"How?" he grinned, counting on "twenty-nine, thirty, thirty-one dollars and ninety-five cents;" then, shoveling the money back into his pocket, added: "What did you say—have I done well for you?"

"Yes," they cried; "de boss said you would share wid us."

"Stiffen me if I do," he chuckled. "I've been working like a hoss since eight o'clock this morning, and have never so much as had a bite or a sup. Now, if you think I'm green enough to do this for you, you're mistaken;" with which he jerked his cap over his eye, and walked off, whistling.

"Go for him?" shouted one.

"Bulldoze him!" yelled another.

"Bust his snoot!" yelled a third, when Jim turned upon them, saying:

"See here, me friends, don't you be rash. You just go to the old man to-morrow, and ask him to loan each of you an omnibus—he'll do it," with which he winked at them, and turning, marched off, saying:

"Thought I'd fetch 'em somehow."

The next morning, when the crowd waited on the proprietor, they found that all the vehicles had been removed to the auction mart.

Presently up sauntered Highfalutin' Jim, as cool as a prize melon.

"Here," they growled, "boss said he intended that benefit for all of us."

"Sorry all of you didn't run it," chuckled our hero, going up to the place where he had stowed the squirt, adding: "It's no good bouncing, boys; you won't get a derved cent out of me;" with which he stooped, and inserting the article in the stable drainings, filled it with the soft liquid.

"You won't, won't yer?" bullied one of the crowd, taking off his coat and throwing himself into a pugilistic attitude. "Come on, an' let me knock der stuffin' outer yer."

"Go along," laughed Jim: "didn't I advertise it as my own benefit? What are you blowing about, hay?"

"Give it to him, Joe," cried the rest of the crowd, who were all afraid of Jim.

Joe danced up to our hero, and squared off, crying:

"Come on, gol darn yer skin," when Jim aimed the squirt at him.

The fellow dodged the stream and retreated to the door, which, as he reached it, was suddenly opened, while Jim, in his haste to empty the contents of the squirt over Joe, showered it all over the person of the new-comer, a short, savage-looking man, who wiping his blinded features, said:

"Wot sort of a bleedin' game do yer call this, eh?" then demanded: "Where's Highfalutin' Jim Bags?"

CHAPTER VIII.

JIM IS SUMMONED TO SEE A THEATRICAL MANAGER.

"WANT me?" calmly inquired Jim, advancing towards the stranger, at the same time slyly tossing away the squirt.

"Yes," growled the man. "I'm from the Grand Duke Theater. The manager wants to see you."

"Engagement to play 'As You Like It,'" smilingly observed Jim, winking at the crowd. "Look here, boys, if I make a good pile I'll share that benefit with you."

"You will?" they cried.

Meanwhile the man from the theater was wiping his face and costume.

When he had cleaned himself, he turned to Jim, saying:

"Come right away! He wants to see you immediately."

"All right," said Jim, and adding in a whisper: "It's all O. K., fellers, the manager has heard of my ability, and is going to bring me out. You'll see me in a play—'Highfalutin' Jim; or, the Adventures of a Poor Young Man,' then nodding to the crowd, followed the messenger, remarking, in a free-and-easy tone: "What does the old man want with me?"

"How the deuce do I know!" snarled the other. "Who was it that hove this stinking stuff over me?"

"I did," calmly replied Jim. "It won't hurt you. It's very simple."

"You seem to think it a big joke," growled the messenger. "If the boss didn't want to see you, I'd punch your nose for you—un'stan'?"

"Oh, you're jokin'," laughed Jim. "You don't know who you're talking to when you speak like that."

"All right," said the man.

"Good enough for me," chuckled Jim. "You've got some of the muck on your neck."

"Well, by thunder, you're cool!" said the other, using his wipe.

"That's me," smiled Jim. "You can't put me out for long! Say, what does the old man want me for? to act?"

"He ain't old," growled the messenger. "Can you act? what have you played in?"

"Hamlet and Richard the Third, King Lear, and Macbeth," cheerfully returned our hero; who had played in an amateur theater something like the Grand Duke Opera House. "You should see my hump as King Dick."

"You'd make a high old actor, I know!" snarled the man. "We don't do the legitimate at our house now, we play all society pieces."

"I can do anything," cheerfully observed Jim. "I'm a top-sawyer at all sorts of acting; I can ram around a stage and roll my eyes like Ed Booth, so that the gals all cry and go off in strong hysterics; I tell you if the old feller wants to fill his house he'd better engage me. If he's lookin' out for a real novelty he'll do it. The old man is smart, knows talent, I reckon. I'm just the boy for him."

In a few minutes they arrived at the theater, and Jim was ushered into the manager's private office, where that great mogul was consulting with his business man.

Jim advanced, smiling, and extending his right hand, said:

"How-dy, old boy?"

"One moment," observed the manager.

"Oh, I ain't in no thundering hurry," grinned Jim. "Take yer time. My name is Bags—Jim Bags. Perhaps you've heard of me as Highfalutin' Jim?"

"One moment," quickly returned the other; while the business manager looked "kickings" at our hero.

Jim sauntered around the gorgeously-fitted office, then seeing some Japanese figures representing roosters, etc., turned to the gentleman, and said:

"Derned ef these ain't real life-like. Did you make 'em, mister?" when again the manager observed:

"One moment, if you please, Mr. Bags."

"Oh! go ahead an' don't mind me," said Jim; "I can amuse myself here, ever so long. Say, don't these cussed comical little figgers look real, though?"

"Here," shouted the business manager, starting to his feet, "will you kindly get out of here until this gentleman has concluded his conversation? Can't you see you're annoying him?"

Jim crossed over to the speaker, looked at him from head to foot, then, to the amusement of the stage manager, said:

"Well, an' who the dickens are you?"

"My name is—never mind—you'll soon learn who I am if you have anything to do with this theater. Now, sit down until that gentleman can attend to you. You've got more cheek than a highwayman's horse."

"Stiffen me, you ain't got none," muttered Jim, adding in a loud voice: "Say, mister, are you any relation to poor Jim Fisk, hey?"

This appeared to amuse both the gentlemen, but neither of them replied.

"I call this treating a star rather mean," murmured Jim, as the clock struck twelve, but the

two talked on, never so much as glancing around at him, so, after awhile, he observed:

"This will have to be allowed for in my bill. My time is worth at least twenty-five cents an hour," still neither of them spoke to him.

The clock ticked off the minutes, then struck the half hour.

"Half after twelve," said the business manager to his chief.

"Yes," put in Jim. "Say, young feller, you didn't tell me whether you was any relation to poor Jim Fisk? I thought a deal ov Jim, I did," but the gentleman only turned his back upon him; seeing which, Jim growled:

"Oh, I un'stan'. You're mad because you can't say you are any kinsman of poor Jim's. Dern it, you ain't much like him—though I never saw Jim."

As the clock struck one, our hero coughed significantly, then, noticing that the consultation was drawing to an end, arose and yawned.

"So you will attend to that immediately?" said the manager to his business man.

"At once," replied the other, arising and withdrawing, but never so much as glancing at Jim.

Turning to the proprietor, the boy said:

"Look here, mister, I'm Highfalutin' Jim Bags. You've sent fur me. Now, what is it you want, hey?"

The gentleman looked at him for an instant, then quietly observed:

"Bags, Jim Bags? Oh, yes. Sit down."

"Thought I'd fetch you, somehow," murmured Jim.

CHAPTER IX.

JIM ENGAGES HIMSELF AS A BULL-DOG.

"YOU'RE the boy who drove one of the new omnibuses on Broadway, are you not?" quickly inquired the manager.

"Yes," nodded Jim. "Did it in style, didn't I?" I tell you, mister, if you want a real high-toned, highfalutin' star to play in your theater, Jim's the boy."

"But I do not require your services as a star," calmly answered the gentleman. "I want you to act as a bull-dog, to watch my bill-boards, and bull-doze any bill-sticker who endeavors to paste posters over them; do you comprehend?"

"I'm be derned if I do!" said Jim. "Bull-doze your bill-stickers."

"Yes," coolly returned the other. "Nice, light occupation. All you'll have to do will be to walk New York city and keep your eye on my property. It's easy enough. Ten dollars a week and see the play every night."

"Well, an' s'pose them bill-stickers does it when I ain't there?" queried Jim.

"You must find out when they are coming around and go for them," said the manager. "You ought not to mind a fight or two, a highfalutin' boy like you."

"I don't mind one or two poundings," said Jim, in a slow, meditative tone, "but 'pears to me you're going to let me in for a hull string! Ten dollars a week ain't much to give a fellow who runs such risks. Can't you offer me a posish in your theater?"

The gentleman smiled, but only shook his head. Then, as Jim looked thoughtful, presently remarked:

"You can carry a revolver, you know—I'll find you one."

"Well," muttered the boy, "I'll try it, Mr. Manager. Guess I can do what any other feller can. I ain't beat—not by a derved sight, although them thick-headed millionaires have refused my services. I'll take the offer."

"Go down to the property-man, and ask him to give you a revolver," said the manager, turning once more to his writing. "He will send some one with you to point out the location of the boards, and the rest is easy. Do not let anyone paste over my bills, and you have a permanent job."

Jim proceeded down to the property-room, where he duly received an antiquated pepper-box revolver.

"Where's the kertridges?" he demanded.

"Oh, it's loaded," answered the man. "You're the new bull-dog, ain't you?"

"Ye-a," said Jim. "What about it? I wants a revolver—not a derved thing rammed full of wooden plugs. I can't trust my valuable life to such a cussed old tool as this—see?"

"Oh, bluff 'em—bluff 'em," returned the other; "use your fists."

Jim grumbled, but took the weapon, then, accompanied by one of the employees of the theater, proceeded around the city, and was shown each bill-board.

"You've got a soft thing," observed the man, as they returned to the theater. "Ten dollars a week to sling around and do nothing."

"Think so?" said Jim; "I guess I'll fetch 'em somehow," with which he invited his companion to take a glass of lager.

The man complied, and they drank several times, after which his new friend said:

"Look here, Jim, take my advice; go right down to Slapup and Pastem, the opposition bill-stickers to ours, tell them you're engaged here, and fix the thing right away."

"How?" ejaculated the boy. "Sell Mr. Manager?"

"Well, he's put you on a job at which we've had a lot of men maimed and half-killed, so now the boys as takes it dodges the poundings by paying the opposition bill-stickers three dollars a week not to post over our bills. Understand?"

"Stiffen me if they gets a red cent out of Highfalutin' Jim," said our hero. "Whatever Slapup and Pastem gits from H. J. B. will be out of my nut. Dern 'em—think I'm going to give 'em any of my hard-earned wages? Not much, by a blessed long way."

"Well, I've told you," said the man. "Yer mustn't give me away, but I don't want ter see a clever fellow like you knocked out of shape—un'stan'?"

"All right," winked Jim.

That afternoon he began his rounds, and after a smoke, sauntered towards a bill-board on Thirty-second street and Sixth avenue.

"Just let one of them cusses come along," he murmured. "Dern 'em, I feel like mashing up a bill-sticker or two. Jes' let 'em try ter paste over this board, now, an' I'll bear down on 'em an' knock seven different colored sawdusts outer 'em in no time. I'm on my muscle, I am. I feel hunk, right from my toes to my hair. I'm jes' downright spiling fur sum sort ov a muss!" with which he paused, buried his hands in his pockets, and began to dance a double-shuffle before the board.

At that instant a big, burly bully, carrying in one hand a tin pail, and grasping a bundle of posters in the other, hove up and began to slam the paste all over the front of the Grand Duke poster.

"Here!" growled Jim, interposing himself between the board and the intruder, "drop it!"

"Drop what?" thundered the bully.

"Just stop pastein' over that bill—hear?" cried Jim.

"Thunderation I will!" yelled the man, working on.

"I'll stop you if you don't!" cried Jim.

"Who the h—l are you?" snarled the man, still pasting.

"I'm the manager's bull-dog!" shouted our hero, drawing his revolver.

In another instant he experienced a vision of a million stars and something wet dabbled into his face, followed by a crushing blow on the back of his head, as though the sidewalk had arisen and hit him; then, as he slowly arose from the mud, he glanced ruefully at the bill-board, and, in lieu of the Grand Duke bill, read:

HE IS COMING!

THOMASIO RUSSELLI,

THE PRINCE OF CONJURERS,

AND

THE CONJURER OF PRINCES!

"Stiffen me!" he murmured, as he wiped the sour paste off his features. "I've caught it this time! It's me as has been bull-dozed; but, dern my skin, H. J. Bags ain't licked; he'll yet fetch them bill-stickers, somehow!"

CHAPTER X.

MYSTERY.

It took Jim some time to clear himself and to remove the obnoxious placard from the face of the bill-board.

When he had completed his task he gave his mouth a wipe, raised his cap on one side of his head and growled:

"Now, let the next buster come along an' try to cover this; stiffen me, but I'll give him a dose."

As he spoke a mild-looking, inoffensive cuss, armed like the bully with paste-pail and brush and carrying a heap of posters slung under his left arm, came along, and, putting down his apparatus, began to eye the billboard, whereupon Jim slouched up to him and, in a bullying tone, said:

"Whatcher goin' ter do, hey?"

"Put on a new poster," replied the man, opening a five sheet.

"No yer don't," snarled the boy, "not on that there board."

"Won't I?" snapped the other; "by the jumping jingle I'd like to see who will hinder me."

"I will," yelled Jim, tearing off his outer garment and throwing himself into a boxing attitude. "I will, me duck; paste a bill on there if you dare."

"Ha—ha—ha!" nervously laughed the poster of placards; "if I dare, eh!" saying which he slapped his brush into the paste, and glowering at our hero, continued: "Are you the highfalutin' rooster who will stop me, eh?"

"Come in!" shouted Jim, dancing backwards and forwards before him. "You've hit it. I'm Highfalutin' Jim Bags, and have taken a contract ter bust yer snoot for yer!" with which he landed "one" on the bill-sticker's nose.

The man reeled up against the wet board, then, recovering himself, once more seized the brush, and, raising it aloft like a sword, went for Jim.

"Rah!" cried a mob of boys, who quickly gathered about the combatants. "Sail in, pasty! Sail in, sonny! Give each other Jessee!"

After flailing away for ten minutes or so, the combatants paused for wind.

Jim was spattered with paste from head to foot.

The bill-sticker had a black eye and a mouse on his forehead.

"I'll let Mr. Manager know of this!" gasped the man of paste. "By the jumping jingle, I'll have our new bull-dog with me next round, an' dern me if he won't kill you!"

"Mr. Who?" ejaculated Jim.

"Mr. Manager of the Grand Duke Theater," snarled the man. "He's my boss, an' I tell you, you'll get it hot for meddling with me."

Jim smiled, then extending his hand, said:

"Why, stiffen me if Manager ain't my boss, too. I've made a slight mistake. Come and take a glass of beer. I took you for one of Slapup an' Pastem's gang. 'Scuse me, won't you? I'm Highfalutin' Jim Bags, the new bull-dog. Glad to make your acquaintance."

"Oh, go ter blazes," growled the man. "Just wait till I get back to the theater. See if I don't fix you."

"You will, will you?" cried our hero, with which he set his teeth and once more sailed in.

After a brief but exciting round, he laid the bill-sticker out on the sidewalk; then, to the delight of his audience, piled the posters on top of the man, emptied the remains of the paste over him, as a sort of gravy, and took to his heels just in time to get away from a policeman, who at that moment arrived upon the scene.

As he paused in order to regain his breath, he smiled, saying:

"So that was Manager's man. Well—well, I fetched him, anyhow," then resumed his progress down town.

When he arrived at his lodging, the landlord said:

"See the notice in the paper about you, Jim?"

"No!" he replied.

"Have yer got a father?" inquired the man.

"No," he answered. "Father left mother and went to Californy; he died out there. Mother died soon after, an' I was dragged up by Uncle Sammy Bags."

"Read that," said the other, handing him a daily paper.

The boy took the sheet and read aloud:

"Highfalutin' Jim Bags. That's me. 'Call at St. Nicholas Hotel and ask for your relative, S. B.'" Then, after thinking awhile, added:

"S. B.—that's my loving Uncle Sam."

"Is he friends with you?" demanded the man.

"I think this advertisement looks fishy."

"Friends," laughingly returned Jim. "Why, the old poke ain't friends with anybody or anything but his money. He worships a dollar. Jes' fancy, after I had worked for him, an' built up a big biz, he actually refused to lend me fifty dollars, an' all I could dig out of the old hub was a quarter of a century. Don't know as I'll go near him. Guess he's heard I ain't struck them millionaires, an' has come on for his money."

"I'd go an' see him," said the other. "He may have some good news for you. How do you know that your father ain't alive?"

"I'm sure of it," answered Jim.

"Well! you go and see your uncle, an' if you don't come back, I shall make inquiries for you," said his friend.

"Look here, old man," grinned Jim, "don't you

worry 'bout Uncle Sam an' me. I kin lick him with one hand."

Proceeding to his room he washed himself, then, dressing in his best costume, started for the St. Nicholas, where he inquired for his uncle.

"Mr. Bags, of Baggsville, room number one hundred and ninety-nine," said the clerk. "He's in—you can go right up to him; he left word that he expected you."

Jim mounted to the floor on which his relative was located, then, knocking on the door numbered one hundred and ninety-nine, cried:

"Uncle Sam!"

"Is that you, Jim?" inquired a hoarse voice, not in the least resembling his uncle's usual tone.

"Ye-a," falteringly answered the boy, as the door opened.

In another moment he was inside and had received a stunning blow upon his temple, then, with a moan, sank on the floor.

CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH THE MYSTERY DEEPENS.

JIM remained quite motionless while his uncle, for it was Sam Bags, bent over him and listened in order to ascertain whether the boy was breathing.

Sam's face was scared and white, and his whole body trembled, while Jim remained quiet as a corpse.

Going to his valise the man took out a peculiar sort of gag which he fitted into his nephew's mouth, then strapped it on so firmly, that while the lad could breathe, he could not speak, and this done, he doubled him up on his side, and forced him into a big hamper that stood in the far corner of the room, after which he corded the package, rang his bell, and ordered a carriage, an open one, giving directions for the baggage to be placed inside the front seat.

In less than ten minutes from the time that his nephew had arrived, Sam was paying his bill and quitting the hotel.

"Did you see a good-sized boy, who came in and asked for you?" inquired the clerk.

"Ye-a," nodded Sam, "he came to summon me home right away;" then noticing the men carrying the hamper containing Jim, said: "Be careful with that?"

The porters obeyed him, and he followed them to the carriage and gave each of them a dollar, after which he entered the vehicle, and bade the coachman drive to a rum-mill, on the North River front, where he was evidently expected.

"All right?" demanded the keeper of the den, as Sam descended and paid his fare.

The scoundrel nodded, and seizing one handle of the hamper, while the landlord grasped the other, lifted it through the bar-room, and carried it down into the cellar, then returned to the carriage, removed his own baggage, and bade the coachman drive off, saying:

"I ain't going no further."

Returning to the cellar, he and the landlord opened the hamper, and rolled Jim's body on to the damp floor.

"By—, Sam, yer've finished him," whispered the man, whose name was Nick Reddy. "I say, how could yer make up yer mind ter kill such a good-looking kid as this?"

"Pshaw! he ain't dead," said Sam, feeling Jim's pulse. "Chuck some cold water on his face."

Nick did as he was ordered, and presently the boy began to revive.

"Shall I remove the gag?" asked Reddy.

Sam nodded, adding, in a low tone:

"He mustn't see me—understand? You've got to fix him here."

"I'll keep him quiet enough," answered the man. "Just open the door," pointing to a low archway under the sidewalk. "No one will hear him there."

Sam, whose face was pale as ashes, nervously unlocked the door in the archway, then followed Nick into the den: a close smelling hole, fitted like a prison, with an iron bedstead and a coarse mattress.

"He'll do here," said Nick. "I often has this archway in use. It's a splendid place ter jug a feller in, but he mustn't remain long or he'll be scooped alive by the rats."

"All right," replied Sam, "I'll take him out before to-morrow night—you must watch him until then—hear?"

Nick brought the inanimate form into the den, laid it upon the bed, and sprinkled some more water upon the pale face, upon which Jim opened

his eyes and sighed, whereupon the two wretches withdrew.

"The rats won't tackle him till after dark," said Nick, as they reached the foot of the ladder. "How are you going to dispose of him?"

"I've engaged a passage to Valparaiso for two dogs," said Sam. "One is fierce, so I told the captain, and I have been obliged to have him inclosed from the other. I have a double pen, and shall ship him with the dog, shut up, of course."

"But, s'pose they open the affair?" queried Nick. "What a derved nice mess you'll be in?"

"Don't you worry," returned Sam. "I shall be on board, and will chloroform him up to the last moment, then the gag will keep him quiet for a day or two."

The pair passed up the stairs, and ascending to the first floor, retired to a private room, where they took a drink.

"By thunder! this job puzzles me!" said Nick, looking Sam straight between the eyes. "Here have I always bin' regardin' yer as a square man, Sam, an' now yer comes ter me with a kidnappin' job? Why, it regler capsizes me! I always thought yer a regler psalm-singing, go-to-meetin' sort of a cuss; but there, yer pays well, so I ain't got nothin' ter chin about."

"Nick," said Sam, "the boy is my nephew; he has committed a crime—forgery; but he's one of them curious constituted cusses that, no sooner had he done the deed, than he wanted to own up, an' return the money! Now, I had that; had spent most of it to pay my debts, so I've bin obliged to fix him—see?"

Nick filled a bumper of brandy, nodded at Sam, drank off the fiery liquid, sat the glass upon the table, and muttered under his breath: "Sam, that's a gol dern lie!"

But his companion did not hear him, being too busy with his own thoughts.

What was it that had changed honest, hard-working Sam Bags into a fiend?

The reader will learn in this story. Even the best of men yield to temptation.

Presently Sam arose, and observing that it was rapidly growing dark, quitted the room, leaving Nick muttering:

"I aint no saint, I ain't, but I feels almost like helping that there kid;" but in lieu of doing so, went into the bar and told his man to go to supper.

CHAPTER XII.

IN WHICH JIM MAKES A DASH FOR FREEDOM.

JIM slowly recovered his senses and endeavored to rise.

"Where am I?" he thought; then, little by little, remembered how, when he entered his uncle's room at the hotel, some one had struck him down.

Raising his voice, he shouted:

"Uncle Sam—Uncle Sam!"

Of course no reply came back, and all he could hear was the low rumble of the vehicles overhead.

Presently it dawned upon him that he was bound; so, instead of endeavoring to free himself, he remained still, husbanding his strength.

"If they think they're going to fix Highfalutin' Jim Bags in this style, they're out," he thought. "I wonder who is playin' this derved game on me? Can't be Uncle Sam. He never got off a joke in his life. Whoever it is they ain't got my money, for I can feel it in my hip pocket. Stiffen me if this don't lick Jim!"

As the evening advanced the rats began to run over him, finding which, instead of yelling at them, he remained quite stiff until a lot of them swarmed on to him and began to nibble his clothing, when he suddenly turned over and smashed two of them.

Then ensued a fearful scrimmage among the brutes that, like cowards, rushed off, leaving their maimed companions squealing like pigs.

Spite of his bonds and bruises Jim laughed.

Nothing could crush the boy's pluck; Heaven knows he was miserable enough.

"Fixed you, stiffen you," he cried, arching his body and bringing it "bang" down upon the crushed vermin. "Wish I had the rooster here who fixed me in this dernation pretty style, I'd bust him same way."

As he spoke the door was opened and Nick Reddy entered.

Seeing that Jim was all O. K., he said:

"Well, sonny, can I get you some supper?"

"Ye-a!" chuckled the boy, "I'd like a nice broiled tenderloin steak, some lettuce, an' a pie or two. I ain't pertickler; but hurry up."

"I've got some nice corned beef an' pickles," grinned Nick. "I'll bring you a dish of them an' some lager; will that do?"

"Hunk!" answered the boy, adding: "Say, will you be kind enough to tell me where Highfalutin' Jim Bags has landed?"

"Don't know him!" laughingly answered Nick.

"I'm the boy!" said our hero: "I'm well off when I'm home; my uncle keeps a big house, owns a hundred and odd horses, and is worth three millions of dollars! Come, just loosen these straps and let me out. I'll give you five thousand dollars if you will do it."

"Say ten thousand, an' I will," said Nick, as he turned to go out. "I'm a poor man, an' money is an object to me."

"Look here, now, I mean biz," quietly observed Jim. "You'd best take my offer."

"Have you any money about you?" inquired the scoundrel.

"Yes," replied the boy, then immediately wished that he had not said it.

Nick quietly placed the light he carried upon the floor of the vault, and going to Jim began to search him.

"Drop it, you derved old thief!" cried the boy, as the fellow discovered his treasure; but Nick only grinned, and securing the bills, walked off with the light, murmuring, gleefully:

"What a derved fool he was ter give himself away?"

When he was gone, Jim silently worked the rope, that tied his hands, across one of the iron ridges of his bed.

In ten minutes he had cut the bond, and was sitting up.

His next move was to free his lower limbs, then to search in his pockets for matches.

"Dern 'em," he muttered, "I'll fix 'em somehow."

Striking a light, he discovered that he was in a long, low vault, that evidently ran under a roadway.

"Stiffen me!" he cried. "They've tried to Charley Ross me. But, who could have done it? not Uncle Sam?" with which he glanced around, in order to discover a weapon.

Presently he found a bludgeon, that had been dropped there by some one, for it was half buried in the dirt upon the floor.

Picking this up, he knocked it against the side of the vault, then returning to the bed, awaited developments; meanwhile Nick Reddy had gone to procure him supper.

"I wonder what they intend to do with me?" he thought, as a heavy wagon rumbled overhead. "They can't mean to kill me."

In a short time he saw a light stream through the chinks of the door of his cell, and heard Nick's voice saying:

"Hush! he's wide awake."

"You bet I am," he thought, seizing the bludgeon and creeping towards the door.

Nick turned the key in the lock and entered, whereupon Jim attacked him with his weapon, raining the blows about the ruffian's head, and knocking the kerosene lamp out of his hand, breaking vessel and chimney into a dozen pieces, and causing a slight explosion.

"Dern you!" cried the boy, "I've fetched you somehow," when, by the light of the spilt kerosene, which was flaming up from the floor, he beheld his uncle's face.

Throwing aside his weapon, for he believed that Sam Bags had come to rescue him, he cried:

"Halloo, uncle!" when the wretch drew a life-preserver from his left sleeve, and, as his nephew neared him, dealt the poor boy a murderous blow.

CHAPTER XIII.

A NEW SYSTEM OF MURDER.

A CAST iron image of a boy would have been knocked out of shape with such an experience as Jim had lately received, and it was no wonder that he was completely disorganized by his uncle's last attack.

Sam gazed on him for a few moments, then said:

"Dern your young skin, for two pins I'd finish you outright."

Then Nick revived, and sitting up, observed in a vague, disjointed way:

"By the holy McCote he's spunky. Say, Sam, yer oughter git rid of him right away. He'll kill one of us afore he gets through."

"I'd kill him for a cent," murmured Sam. "Gol dern his young carcass, I know, if I let him live, he'll fix me. Nothing easier than knocking him on the head and burying him here, hey?"

"I'll show you a better plan," whispered Nick. "This arch is built over a sewer, there's a man-

hole in this floor; heave him in an' let him drown in the sewer. Nothing living could get through the grating at the mouth of the culvert."

It is probable that, but for a mere accident, Jim's life would have been cut short there and then; but it so happened that, at that moment, a well-known thief, chased by the police, took shelter in the house, and knowing all about the place, descended to the cellar, where he discovered Sam and Nick endeavoring to drag the boy into the far end of the vault.

He was a tall, muscular fellow, and although a thief, was above committing any violent crime.

Bursting in upon them, he cried:

"Halloo! what's up?"

"Who the—?" began Nick, but, on seeing his customer, paused, adding: "What sent you down here in such a hurry?"

"My old friends, the cops," laughingly answered the man. "Say, what are you going to do with that kid?"

"He's bin fakin'," said the bully.

"Don't look like one of us?" observed the newcomer, whose professional name was "Sly Charley."

"It's all up with our plan," whispered Nick, to his companion. "You'll have to ship him as you said you would."

"Dern it, I can't," replied Sam. "The owners have sent me notice that they won't carry dogs."

Nick swore inwardly for awhile, then, turning to Sly Charley, said:

"See here, you're wanted by ther cops. Now, would you mind going a v'yage with this boy?"

"Where to?" demanded the pickpocket.

"Oh, not many miles from land," grinned Nick. "You know how to manage a cat-rigged boat, don't you?"

"Yes," said the fellow; "what about it?"

"Well, you take this boy aboard my craft, the one I use for smuggling cigars, *et cetera*, make fast a dory astern, and run down the bay and out to sea; stand off until night, till you see two or three outward bound ships, then sail across their bows, and when every thing is favorable, put this boy into the dory, with a ship's lantern in the stern, and cut him adrift, right in the course of some big craft. Do you understand?"

"S'pose they run him down?" said Charley.

"Oh, you can fix that," put in Sam. "When you see them bearing down on your bottom, then cut the painter and let the dory go. He'll be picked up fast enough, you needn't worry. Nick's plan is good."

"Well, but what am I to get for risking all that?" murmured the pickpocket. "It's next door to murder, and I never will have anything to do with that!"

"Oh, don't be so gol darned soft!" snarled Nick. "My friend, here, will pay you well—won't yer, Sam?"

"I'll give you five hundred dollars, if you do it neatly," said Jim's uncle. "I'll put the money into Nick's hands, and after he's fixed, you can sail the boat down to some place on Staten Island and receive the stamps."

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said Charley; "I'll take a hundred dollars and the boat!"

Sam looked at Nick, and as the latter nodded assent, said to the pickpocket:

"All right. You must be ready to sail right away—to-night."

"Is the boat provisioned?" inquired Charley.

"Yes. Grub and water enough aboard to last two men a month or six weeks," replied Nick.

"I'm there," said the man. "Now the next thing will be to get off without being spotted by them cops."

"We'll fix that," said Nick. "Come up to my room, and I'll fit yer out as a regular sailor man. I've got a bushy, red, false beard an' mustache, that will suit yer complexion nicely, an' by paddin' we kin fix yer so as to fool any copper in the city force," saying which he led the way up stairs, leaving Sam to watch the still form of Highfalutin' Jim.

Left alone with the boy, the man seated himself on the bed, rested his face on his hands, and fell into a deep train of thought, presently speaking aloud, saying:

"I'm a scoundrel, Jim, that's what I am. I've wronged you, but it's gone too far between us, my boy, for me to go back. You know who did this, an' it will now be war to the knife between us. I don't want to kill you, Jimmy—no! God knows I have done enough against you without doing that."

Then rising and going into the cellar, he fetched a bundle containing clothing, after which he raised the inanimate form, placed it on the bed and stripped it; then binding Jim's wound,

dressed him in a curious foreign costume, and began to fan him, in order to revive the lad.

About midnight Nick and Charley returned, and by that time Jim, who had been dosed with small quantities of brandy, revived and was able to walk and, after a fashion, talk.

"Everything is O. K.," whispered Nick. "Boat's all right."

"Come, Jim," said his uncle, "are you ready to go home?"

"Ye-yes," drowsily murmured the poor fellow. "I'll fetch it—somehow."

Then, assisted by them, quitted the place.

CHAPTER XIV.

JIM GOES TO SEA WITH SLY CHARLEY.

"Who have you got there?" demanded a pa-

bor, whereupon Charley luffed up in the wind and proceeded on his way seaward.

It was a beautiful night, and the fresh air had the effect of bringing Jim to his senses; but, judging by his former experiences, in lieu of speaking, he wisely pretended to be insensible.

When he left the brandy with Charley, Sam had not explained that it was drugged, and had merely said: "Give him a table-spoonful of this in a gill of water whenever he shows signs of coming to, or talking too much," so, running in close to the shore, he anchored, and pouring out a good lot of the brandy, drank it off, then turned in, leaving Jim, as he believed, lying asleep on the other seat of the boat.

The sun arose, and boats began to ply past them; but our hero was too weak to hail any of the crafts, besides which, he was afraid

best to kill me now, so I won't try to clear him. He's my enemy. Why, the goodness only knows. I wonder who this old blue nose is I'm with now? Well—well, this is a funny world, but Jim ain't licked—no, not by a derved sight! I'm going to be a millionaire, or something of that sort—stiffen me if I ain't!" with which he arose and surveyed the scene about him.

About a quarter of a mile astern was an outward bound Dutchman, on her way to Surinam, in the East Indies, while to leeward of him was a steamer.

Ahead, to windward, were several homeward bound craft.

Charley had taken a considerable dose of the drugged brandy, and was snoring like a hog.

"It seems to me," continued Jim, "that that big ship behind us is gradually coming up to us."



"Here, you, Ben Hayes! Harry Price! Tommy Stone!" shouted Jim, to the depot loafers, "wot's the matter with old Pearce? is he on a bender?"

trolman, as Sam and Sly Charley arrived near the pier to which Nick's boat was moored.

"A Portugee—as drunk as David's son," laughingly answered the pickpocket, who, in his disguise, looked every inch a sailor. "I'm going to take him on board the *Como Esta Antonio*, the Portugee man-o'-war that's down the harbor. Lend us a hand, officer."

"Oh, you can take him along," surlily replied the copper. "If you wait awhile, the boat from the man-o'-war will be here and take him from you."

"An' lose the reward for carryin' ov him off," chuckled Charley. "Not much," with which he and Sam half dragged, half led poor stupefied Jim down the pier, and lowering him on to the deck of a small, cat-rig, suspicious-looking craft, cast off the beackets of the mainsail, and hoisting it, sheet-home, pushed off from the pier, and stood out across the river; then, when almost midway they went about and ran down the harbor, towing two dories behind them.

When they had passed the Portugeese man-of-war they hove to for a moment, and Sam gave the pick-pocket a flask containing opium and brandy, then, handing him a hundred dollars, observed:

"Now, if you take my advice, Charley, you'll get rid of that boy, and shape your course for some place where you're not known." Saying which he took a last look at the nephew whom he had so foully wronged, then entered one of the dories, and hoisting the sail, steered up the har-

bor, whereupon Charley luffed up in the wind and proceeded on his way seaward.

He had just power enough to reach out his hand and help himself to some sandwiches which his uncle had left near him; not for Jim but for his own use.

Slowly the sun arose, and, after awhile, the heat overcame the drug in the brandy swallowed by Charley, who, rousing out, raised the anchor and trimming the sail, started for Sandy Hook.

The wind being light they did not reach it until nightfall, and it was ten o'clock ere they were clear out to sea.

Sailing up to windward in order to be in the track of outward bound foreign ships, Charley took another stiff tod, then seating himself at the helm, gradually fell asleep.

As soon as he began to snore, Jim, whose strength had gradually returned, sat up and stretched himself. During the day he had, unobserved, when Charley was dozing, eaten all the sandwiches and swallowed the contents of two lager beer bottles; so now, with the exception of his bruises, he felt pretty good.

The moon was shining brightly, and the wind was just sufficient to keep the boat moving.

"I wonder why, in the name of goodness," he murmured, "has Uncle Sam taken all this trouble to get rid of me. Was I dreaming? No, it was he. Stiffen me if I can make out his blessed move. He never tried to hurt me when I was living with him. He was mean, fond of money, an' all that, but, dern him, he's done his

Dern it, there goes the moon. Now, it will be so dark that she won't see us, and may run us down. I've heard of such things," saying which, he grasped Sly Charley by the collar, and weakly endeavored to shake him.

"Go—b—blazes!" growled the pickpocket.

"Here—mister—a ship's coming right slap after us," gasped the now affrighted boy.

"Go—ll murmured the drunken man. "Wash I care! L'em come."

"But, blame it," cried Jim, "we shall be drowned—don't you un'stan?"

"Drown—be—dern! Ish all rish!" said Charley.

By that time the boat had swung around and was hove to, right across the course of the approaching ship.

Rising, Jim gave one long, piercing shriek, then, in another instant, was hit by the dolphin striker of the vessel, and went down with the man and boat—down—down—under the ragged, coppered bottom of the immense craft, his frail support sinking beneath him like a stone.

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH JIM ASTONISHES THE CAPTAIN.

THE Dutch ship kept a good lookout, and, as she struck the craft containing Jim, the order was given to "heave to, and lower all boats."

This maneuver was capitally executed, and

soon six searching parties were rowing in the direction of the collision.

Sly Charley, full to the neck, went to the bottom like a pig of lead, but Jim, being light and sober, though no great swimmer, struck out faintly, and contrived to keep upon the surface, finally turning upon his back and floating.

"He's scumewhere here," cried a tall, handsome Dutch sailor, who was steering the foremost boat; then, as he spied our hero, added: "Here he is."

"God be praised!" ejaculated the other Dutchmen; speaking, of course, in their own language.

"Ship ahoy!" cried the first speaker. "We've found one body," with which, he ran alongside of Jim, who was quickly lugged on board of the boat, and dosed with schnapps.

The next morning Jim was able to sit up, and by noon had dressed himself ready to go on deck.

"Ain't this all a comical sort of a dream?" he murmured. "Can this be real?"

As he spoke the doctor entered the cabin, and after inquiring about his health, observed:

"Your money is all right."

"You don't say?" chuckled Jim. "I thought that old blue-nosed buster took it?"

"How came you to have such a large sum on your person?" said the gentleman.

"Oh, that's a mere trifle," laughingly observed Jim. "I earned it driving an omnibus up an' down Broadway."

"What! you earned two thousand dollars at driving an omnibus?" ejaculated the surgeon.

"Impossible."

"Two thousand?" gasped our hero. "You're

"How came you in the boat?" inquired the captain.

Upon thus being invited, Jim launched out, embellishing his story in his usual highfalutin' style, until the captain looked at the doctor, and the latter winked and nodded back, as much as to say:

"Crazy, sir, crazy; he must be off his chump."

Now, had Jim merely told the plain, unvarnished truth, he would possibly have been believed right away; but he so worked up the facts, adding wonderful descriptions of single combats, and the way he had been opposed to and overcome odds of a dozen or two pitted against him, that neither the captain nor the doctor could hoist in his cuffers; this nettled him.

"You say that your uncle is at the bottom of all this?" said the skipper, who began to regard



"Come an' lay that money down on the head of that cask, or I may shewt, you pug-nosed, red-eyed, gob-mouthed, dirty-skinned bully," said Jim.

The "good Samaritans" rowed back to the ship, and Jim was passed up the gangway, and taken into a cabin on the poop—for she was one of the old-time vessels that are now seldom seen afloat.

Her captain, Von Skimmeldecken, sent his doctor to the boy, then gave orders to continue their voyage.

Having been long employed running between Amsterdam and New York, the skipper spoke very good English, a language more or less understood by all on board.

When the surgeon had examined Jim's wounds and bound them, he administered a cup of coffee to him, which revived our hero so much that he was enabled to sit up and converse with his rescuers.

"Now you lie down and sleep good," said the doctor. "In the morning you can tell your story."

"Stiffen me!" murmured the boy, who was half confused, and could scarcely realize that he was among friends. "You are awful good and kind, you are."

Then, resting his face on his left arm, fell into a refreshing sleep.

In drying Jim's garments the honest Dutch sailors found an oilskin bag, tied so tightly as to be completely water-proof, while in it were four five hundred-dollar bank bills.

These they took to the captain, who sealed them in an envelope.

poking fun at me, mister. Don't guy a shipwreck like me."

The doctor called to the captain, who was passing, and that officer confirmed his statement, saying:

"I'll show you the money, if you wish?"

"Well, I would like to see two thousand dollars of my own money," said Jim, in a puzzled voice. "Stiffen me if I believe that I'm awake. I shall arouse up presently and find that I've been dreaming."

Then, turning to the surgeon, added:

"Mister, will you be kind enough to pull my nose?"

"Why?" smilingly demanded the gentleman.

"Because I don't think this is real," said Jim.

"It can't be; I shall awake in a minute or two and see the old loft an' hear Uncle Sam yell: 'Come, you lazy boy, Jim, none of your tricks; don't lie there in the shavings all the afternoon.' It ain't possible that I've been through all them terrible experiences, and that now I'm aboard ship an' worth two thousand dollars! Stiffen me! I must either be dreamin' or crazy."

"You're neither," quietly replied the doctor. "Here comes the captain with the money found on your person."

As the skipper entered he handed Jim the sealed envelope, and the boy opened it, saying, when he saw its contents:

"I never owned such big money before. Stiffen me!"

Jim as a first-class fraud. "How do you account for his attack? What reasons could he have for desiring to put you out of the way?"

"It's a darned conundrum," said Jim, shaking his head. "I remember entering his room in the St. Nicholas Hotel, and being knocked silly, but after that until I came to in the vault, I don't recollect anything."

"And this two thousand dollars?" returned the captain.

"Guess it's counterfeit," returned Jim, placing the bills in the envelope and pocketing it. "When I get back to New York I'll have 'em examined. Thank you."

"We're bound for Surinam in the Dutch East Indies," said the skipper. "You'll be some time before you see New York. Now, do you expect that, unless you work, I'm going to carry you for nothing? You say that those bills are counterfeit. Your story, in every way, makes me suspicious."

"Got me," muttered the boy; then smiling on the captain, added: "Look here, mister, you jes' put me aboard the first homeward-bound craft we meet, and I'll pay you for your trouble."

"I do not want your pay, if you are an honest boy," said the skipper; "but it seems to me that you lie."

"Bless you," chuckled Jim, "that's only my highfalutin' way; you ain't used to H. J. Bags. Now, what part of my story don't you believe?"

"In the first place," began the captain, "I can't hoist in your yarn about your uncle having advertised for you. Why should he not put his full name to such a notice?"

"You don't believe me, cap'n?" grinned Jim. "Well, s'pose I prove what I say about that ad., will you credit the rest of my story?"

"Certainly," said the gentleman; "I shall be compelled to."

"You have files of the latest New York papers aboard, hey?" demanded the boy.

"Yes," answered the captain.

"Have 'em brought here," said Jim; "I'll soon show you whether I'm a howling liar or a high-toned, honorable, truthful, respectable, reliable American citizen."

The newspapers were procured and the advertisements for him duly found, whereupon he turned triumphantly to the skipper, saying:

"I knowed I'd fetch you, somehow."

CHAPTER XVI.

FORTUNE FROWNS ON THE CAPTAIN, BUT SMILES ON JIM.

FROM that time Highfalutin' Jim became a hero in the eyes of Captain Von Skimmeldecken and the ship's doctor, who loaned him clothes and treated him like a prince.

"There is some awful mystery about your family," said the worthy Dutchman to Jim, as the latter lighted a fragrant Havana, given him by his new friend. "If you take my advice you'll go to Surinam with us; that will give your uncle lots of time in which to carry out his rascality, then you can return with us, and I will help you recover your rights."

"Say, what do you think I can recover?" inquired Jim, who every moment felt more and more impressed with the mystery. "I always believed that I should be a millionaire. I can feel it in my bones. See here, cap, what do you think that this secret is?"

"In Surinam," said the skipper, "there lives an old woman who has the gift of double sight."

"What! kin she see out of the back of her old cocoanut!" grinned Jim.

"No," returned his friend. "She can look backwards into your life and tell you things that are mysteries to you; for instance, she can inform you why your uncle wished to get rid of you, and can put you in the way to recover your property."

"Stiffen me!" ejaculated Jim. "Is that so?"

"Yes," gravely answered the captain. "She's a wonder."

"Ain't it going a deuce ov a way to find out what I shall have, really, to learn at home?" said Jim, whose long head was equal to the occasion. "I don't see how she can tell. What do you think is the reason why Uncle Sam has hunted me so?"

Captain Skimmeldecken thought awhile, then said:

"I believe that your father is alive; that he has made a large fortune in California, and has returned or sent a remittance to your uncle for you."

"No," murmured Jim. "That ain't it. I've thought of that."

"That is it," quickly returned the other. "Everything shows I am right. Your uncle advertised for you, so that he could show the notice to your father, he takes off your blooded garments, and clothes you in foreign togs, taking care to give you a sum of money, which he does to ease his conscience."

"Oh, he ain't got none," laughingly interposed Jim. "You don't know Uncle Sammy Bags if you think he has any conscience; besides, you're teetotally wrong about father; he's dead."

"How do you know, my son?" said his friend. "Lots of people, who went to California in the first rush, were reported to be dead, but have since returned. Depend upon it your father has turned up, and in order to secure his money, your miserable uncle has endeavored to make away with you."

"You're wrong," grinned Jim; "why, when my pop died, they embalmed his body an' expressed it home, across the plains, by pony express. The miners thought everything of my father, and made up a purse to defray the expenses of sending his body home. You haven't hit the dot this time, cap."

"Are you sure the body was that of your parent?" said his friend.

"Well," smilingly answered Jim, "I rayther guess my mother knowed her own husband. No, cap, this ain't my father revived an' come to life. It licks Highfalutin' Jim, this do, an' all I want is to git back an' to examine into the mystery. Your old woman in Surinam won't be

able to tell H. J. B. half so much as I can learn for myself when I can see Bagsville. I'm bound to fetch it somehow."

"Oh, you go on with me to Surinam," said the skipper, who had made up his mind that Jim's father was alive, and that he, the captain, was the only person who could help the boy.

"No, sir," chuckled our hero, "Jim don't visit no Surinam—no, not if he has to swim back."

From that time they dropped the subject, until, after passing several homeward-bound American ships without hailing them, Jim up and spoke out his mind to Captain Von Skimmeldecken, saying:

"Look here, cap. I want to go home. Now, you best put me aboard the next York-bound ship, or it will be worse for you, for you won't have any luck;" but the Dutchman was obstinate, and believing that he was serving the boy by carrying him on to Surinam, did not attempt to send him aboard any of the vessels they constantly met.

One night, about seven bells, Jim was awakened by the doctor, who quietly bade him come on deck.

Seizing his clothes he obeyed the summons, and on reaching the poop, found the men at work pumping water down the main hatchway, from which issued a cloud of dense smoke.

"What's the matter?" whispered Jim. "Is the ship on fire?"

"Yes," hurriedly replied the doctor. "Go to the pumps, Jim. God help us—it's all up with us!"

He needed no second request, but throwing aside his coat, seized a rope of the break, and pumped away like a man.

Little by little the fire worked forward, until the decks grew hot, and the scalding pitch boiled out of the seams.

Von Skimmeldecken's face was pale, for his all was risked in the ship; but he gave his orders as calmly as though there had not been any danger, saying, in Dutch:

"Man the long-boat, provision it, put water aboard and a compass. Head due east, but wait for the other boats!" then turning to Jim, observed in English: "My boy, you go in her. I wanted to take you to Surinam, but I have been prevented. I wish you well."

Jim wrung his friend's hand, and with the doctor, embarked in the long-boat, which was quickly shoved off from the side of the doomed ship.

As the crew lay on their oars, they heard the captain on board the burning craft order away each party, and when the day dawned, quite a little fleet hoisted sail and stood away to the east.

"All saved?" inquired Von Skimmeldecken, rising in his gig, and glancing around at the boats.

"All safe," replied the various officers in charge.

"Good-by, then," observed the skipper, turning and glancing at his burning vessel. "Good-by, old ship."

As though in reply to his words, the deck opened, a cloud of smoke flew upward, and a tremendous report followed; then the ill-fated craft burst asunder, the water pouring in, and she sank like a stone, leaving nothing but her water-casks and spare spars to mark the spot where she had disappeared.

All that day the little flotilla sailed eastward, the burning sun scorching their exposed bodies, but no one complained. Were not their lives spared?

About sundown the captain ran his gig alongside the long boat and took charge of the latter.

As he seated himself by the mate, who was steering, he turned to Jim, saying:

"My boy, you said if I did not put you aboard one of those homeward-bound ships I should not have any luck. You were right."

"That was only my fun," said our hero. "I'd rather have made two voyages with you, cap, than for you to have lost your ship."

As he said these words a man in one of the leading boats cried out:

"A steamship, standing towards us, bound westward!"

CHAPTER XVII.

JIM'S LUCK TURNS—OFF FOR BAGSVILLE.

ON came the ship, and in the course of an hour she was near enough for them to hail her.

"Steamer, ahoy!" shouted Captain Skimmeldecken.

A responsive shout came from the bow of the vessel, and in a short time she was going astern,

then presently stopped, and hailed to the boats to come alongside.

She proved to be the Inman steamship *City of Philadelphia*, Captain James Kennedy, who welcomed the unfortunates on board, and gave them suitable accommodation, then hoisting in their boats, proceeded on his voyage to New York.

Everything that could be was done for the castaways, but Highfalutin' Jim insisted upon taking first-class passages for himself, the captain and doctor, tendering one of his five hundred dollar bills by way of payment.

The purser felt it, smelt at it, held it up to the light, examined it with a magnifying glass, and called in the assistance of two bankers, who were among the passengers, before he decided to accept the bill, and even then refused to give Jim the change, saying:

"I'll pay it to you when we reach New York."

"All right," answered the boy. "Guess you'll find it O. K."

On the fifth day they sighted Sandy Hook, and if ever a boy felt good, it was Highfalutin' Jim.

He danced a double-shuffle and laughed to himself; then, every now and then, burst out:

"If I don't give my Uncle Sam cayenne pepper, my name ain't Highfalutin' Jim Bags. I'm just goin' to make a bee-line for Bagsville, an' if I don't warm the old poke, I want to know. I'd like to learn the reason why he licked me on the head; why he put me in that cussed hole; why he dressed me like a derved Portygee an' sent me out in that boat? Uncle Sam, you an' I have got to come to a settlement. You never put two thousand dollars in my pocket unless you'd bagged a pile of my money. Oh! Uncle Sammy—Uncle Sammy, I wouldn't be in your old shoes for a big heap of stamps. Highfalutin' Jim is on your track, old man. I'll wire you, you derved, miserable, unnatural wretch! Yes, I'll wire you; so true as my name is H. J. B., I'll fetch you somehow!"

On their way up the bay they were boarded by a number of correspondents from the various newspaper offices.

Jim was in his glory, and gave the news-gatherers a most highfalutin' account of his adventures.

Most of them recorded what he said; however, as his story appeared too romantic to be true, none of them but the *New York Herald* man used his information.

Upon arriving at the wharf the purser quitted the ship; but by the time the passengers were ready to embark he returned with change for the five-hundred dollar bank bill.

"Good enough, wasn't it?" said our hero, as the man paid over his balance.

"Yes," replied the purser; "there's no mistake about the money being genuine. Wish I had a thousand such."

Seeking out Captain Von Skimmeldecken, whom he found seated moodily in the grand saloon, Jim said:

"Cap, you've been mighty kind to me—saved my life when I was pretty well played out—believed my story, an' did yer level best to help me. I don't mind your trying to take me to Surinam. You mean't well, cap; but it wasn't to be. No, sir! Now if you will take a loan of one of these five-hundred dollar bills, an' pay me whenever it's convenient, here it is," with which he placed the money on the captain's knee, and was walking off, when Von Skimmeldecken called him back, saying:

"I can't rob you, Jim. I'm a ruined man—every cent I had in the world was in that ship."

"Oh, take it—take it," hurriedly answered the generous boy. "I've got plenty, and bless you. I mean to shake my fortune out of Uncle Sam Bags."

"You're a brave, good fellow," said the skipper. "I'll pay you again just as soon as I earn the money; but it may be years before I am in a position to do this, as I have a wife and a large family at home."

Jim pressed his hand good-by, then, after bidding the doctor, officers, and crew of the ill-fated ship adieu, stepped ashore and proceeded to his old boarding-house.

"My gracious!" said the man who kept it, "you alive, Jim? Why, I dreamed that they had killed you, and have long ago given you up. Where have you been?"

"Well," laughingly replied our hero, "I've been killed two or three times, or as good as served that way. I've been drowned outright, burned out, shipwrecked, and otherwise knocked around. Yet, here I be safe and sound," with which he related his wonderful adventures, ending with: "If Uncle Sam imagines that he is going to bounce H. J. B., he'll be sucked in. I'm bound to fetch him somehow."

"I know where he took you," said his land-

lord, "he took yer to Nick Reddy's, down by the water-side, yer've described him to a pimple."

"I mean that Nick shall pony up them stamps that he stole from me," chuckled Jim. "Darn his alligator skin, he just turned me over and plundered me with no more civility than a boy takes a nest of eggs, stiffen me if I don't make him sweat for it."

"Easy—easy," said the man. "If yer arrest Nick, he will communicate with your uncle, then yer plan is bust clear up."

"That's so," muttered Jim. "I didn't think of that; well, I'll go an' buy some clothes, then take a trip to Bagsville, drop in on my dearly-beloved uncle, an' if he don't explain matters, give him such a tow-rowing that he'll wish he hadn't done it."

"Got any money?" inquired the man; "thought yer said that Nick Reddy had robbed yer?"

"I've made a strike!" laughingly answered Jim, who had been too smart to tell his landlord about finding the bills; "don't you worry, old hoss, I kin bum along without borrowing any staamps," with which he quitted the house and walking to Broadway, entered a furnishing store, where he selected a good stock of under garments, then visited a celebrated tailor, and ordered several suits of clothes, one of which was to be delivered that evening.

On his way home he met Captain Von Skimmeldecken who told him that he was boarding at the St. Nicholas, and that the clerk at the hotel had confirmed all Jim had said.

"See here," observed our hero; "I am but a boy, though I look quite nineteen; now folks don't like to change five hundred dollar bills for a youngster; can you get these two turned into small bills for me?"

"Come down to the bank," said the skipper, and soon our hero had a nice, neat package of currency which he secured inside his vest, while the captain observed:

"Let me know how you get on with your uncle, as I'm curious to learn the mystery?" with which he gave Jim his address.

"You shall hear," said the boy, then, shaking hands, they parted.

Two days after that, Jim was seated in the cars bound for Bagsville, a smile was on his face, and as the train rushed onward, he murmured:

"Uncle Sammy, dern yer, I'm goin' to fetch you somehow."

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN WHICH OUR HERO CREATES A GREAT SENSATION.

It was almost dusk when Highfalutin' Jim arrived at Bagsville, for which place he was the only passenger.

On the platform stood the depot master, chatting with the conductor, the ticket clerk was receiving baggage, and a few loungers were loafing about the premises, otherwise the place was deserted enough.

Our hero had not seen anyone on board the train that he knew, and the conductor was a stranger, so he had refrained from asking any questions.

What a difference to his departure, but a few weeks before. Then the depot was crowded with his old chums; now all was as quiet as the grave.

Stepping on to the platform he paused, in order to stretch his limbs, then, advancing to the ticket clerk, who was examining his baggage, said:

"Halloo, Frank, how-de do? What cheer, old Stinkum?"

In lieu of replying, the young man stared at him for a moment, after which, uttering an unearthly moan, he fell back fainting; at the same time the train moved slowly off.

"Here, Mr. Pearce," cried Jim, "what's the matter with Frank? Is he taking to having fits?" saying which Jim advanced to the depot master, whereupon the man gasped, dropped his lantern, gave a whoop that might have been heard all over Bagsville, and took to his heels.

"Here, you, Ben Hayes! Harry Price! Tommy Stone!" shouted Jim, to the depot loafers, who were further down the platform, "wot's the matter with old Pearce? Is he on a bender?"

The loafer addressed, some of Jim's old chums, turned, walked up to him, opened their mouths, stared as though crazy, and, screaming at the top of their voices, followed the example of the depot master, yelling as they went:

"A go—ghost! A go—go—ghost! Mur—der!" Not understanding their cry, Jim scratched his head, then glanced towards the spot where he had left the ticket clerk, but that functionary had vanished.

While our hero's back was turned, Frank had revived, and had crawled off upon his hands and knees.

"Well, stiffen me if this ain't derned strange!" murmured Jim, taking the check off his valise, and leaving the exchange brass in lieu. "Has everybody in Bagsville gone stark, starin', ravin', rampin', roarin' mad?" with which he shouldered his baggage and marched towards the village, distant about two hundred yards.

The evening was warm and a thunderstorm was brewing, so very few people were out.

About half way to the nearest house he met a deaf man, named Tony Abbot, who was walking past him, when Jim bawled:

"Good-night, Tony, how's Jake?"

"Wa-wa—who are you?" cried the deaf man, in a terrified sort of voice, at the same time drawing back, as though our hero had the small-pox.

"Why, don't yer know me?" shouted Jim. "I'm Highfalutin'——" but the words had scarcely passed his lips ere, uttering a yell of horror, Tony turned and fled, screaming like a maniac.

"Stiffen me ef this ain't comical!" grinned Jim, as he re-shouldered his valise and continued his walk. "Dern 'em, they all seems scared with my new clothes."

On he trudged until he reached the post-office, a two-roomed building kept by Sally Combs, one of the biggest gossips in Bagsville.

When the boy neared her house, Sally was presiding at a candy-pulling, given in honor of her seventieth birthday, and her two rooms were cram full of visitors.

"Halloo!" chuckled Jim, as the well-known fumes of 'lasses candy saluted his nostrils. "Old Sal's havin' a candy-pull, eh? Well, guess I'll drop in an' surprise the boys an' gals," with which he paused, jerked down his vest, and, removing his hat, began to smooth his hair with his hands.

Leaving him to prepare for his entrance upon the festive scene, we will explain what his uncle had done after leaving him in charge of Sly Charley.

Upon landing Sam had proceeded to Nick Reddy's, and, after holding a long consultation with that worthy, had visited the morgue, where they had claimed the dead body of a young man that had been found floating in the river.

As very few people would want to take charge of a decomposed corpse that did not belong to them, the authorities had believed Sam's story, that the body was that of his nephew Jim, and had duly delivered it to him; whereupon he procured a coffin and removed the remains to Nick Reddy's, where they contrived to envelope it in the garments Sam had taken from Jim's person.

That accomplished, the coffin was expressed to Bagsville, and, armed with a permit to bury "James Bags, accidentally drowned in the East River, New York," the scoundrel, his relative, set out for home; having telegraphed ahead, "Poor Jim is drowned; I am bringing on his body for burial alongside his parents."

Everyone in the place had turned out to do honor to the remains of Highfalutin' Jim, who was well liked by old and young, and there was a big funeral, Sam pretending to be completely prostrated with grief.

Having placed the body in the family plot, the wretch sold off his property and quitted the town; giving as a reason that, now poor Jim was gone, he could not bear to remain in the place, as everything reminded him of his nephew.

Sam had not left any address; in fact, had told the folks that he never again wished to hear or think of Bagsville.

Some few of the townspeople had seen the body, but, beyond recognizing the clothes, none of them had been able to identify Jim's face—it was too far gone.

When our hero paused, outside of the post-office, old Sally Combs was dilating upon his virtues, and everybody was pulling candy and joining in his praise.

"Ye-a," said old Sal, yanking away at a nice little lump, "he was a bully b'y, was Highfalutin' Jim. I loved him jes's much as I did one of my own b'ys. He used tew kum in here when he was quite a little fellow, an' he'd say, in his highfalutin' way—"

Sally never finished that speech, for, as she uttered the word *way*, Jim threw open the door of the room used as a post-office and general store, and, raising his voice, shouted:

"Halloo, Miss Combs! How de do?" then, bumping his valise down upon the counter, turned to address the crowd, when he saw their skirts vanishing through the doors.

"Stiffen me! wot's the derned joke?" he cried, making a grab at the last in sight, and getting hold of her overdress; but, ere he could secure

her, she had slipped her garment, leaving him the sole occupant of the post office, and possessor of the candy.

"My gracious!" he moaned, as he seated himself on a chair in the inner room, "when am I a goin' ter wake up? Ain't I been in one thunderin' long dream? No, this is the post office; there's the candy;" then, pausing and thinking awhile, said: "Blest if I don't think they takes me fur a ghost. Well, I've fetched 'em somehow."

CHAPTER XIX.

GETTING ON SAM'S TRAIL.

"STIFFEN me," chuckled Jim, as the truth gradually dawned upon him. "Wot's to be did?"

At that moment the muzzle of a big, bell-mouth blunderbuss was poked in at the window, and the voice of Deacon Provis, one of the select men, was heard, saying:

"If you are a ghost, vanish; if you are flesh an' blood, surrender or I'll shewt."

"Here! my gracious! Don't shewt!" yelled Jim, diving under the old woman's bed, whereupon he heard Provis say:

"It's a flesh and blood voice."

"I surrender," shouted Jim, poking his head out from under the bed. "I ain't no ghost."

"Come forth," commanded the deacon, as though summoning some unclean spirit. "Who are you?"

Rising, Jim got into a safe corner, by the chimney, then said:

"Stiffen me if I rightly know who I am. I always believed that my name was Highfalutin' Jim Bags, but lately, I've had such dearned comical adventures that I begin to think I must be somebody else," adding, with an audible snigger: "Ain't you Deacon Provis?"

"I am," solemnly answered the old man, who was not quite sure whether our hero was a ghost or not. "Are you a spirit, or how?"

"Come an' stick yer finger in my mouth an' I'll soon show you, deacon," chuckled the scamp.

"Come forth," said the old fellow.

"You'll promise not to shewt, ef I do?" cautiously demanded Jim. "I don't want to go bumming about the world with a lot of lead slugs in my interior—un'stan'?"

"That's Highfalutin's voice," cried Sally. "I know it's him."

"Right yer are," laughingly answered Jim, stepping up to the window. "Halloo, folks, how air yew?"

"Why, Jim!" they exclaimed, "we thought that you was dead and buried."

"Not by a derned long way," he grinned. "Say, where's me devoted, loving Uncle Sammy?"

"He brought yer body here, then sold off an' cleared out," said one.

"Was so grieved at yewr death, thet he sed he couldn't bear tew remain here," observed another.

"Was quite broken down with yer loss," said a third; "never saw a man so changed in a short time. He's a mere shadder."

Jim incredulously pointed his right thumb over his left shoulder, then muttered:

"So am I—over der left—un'stan'?"

"His hair was turning white," remarked the deacon.

"I'll dye it fur him when I sees him," grinned Jim. "Come right in, friends, an' finish the candy pull. I ain't no ghost, but real flesh an' blood—the same old Highfalutin' Jim Bags—but stiffen me, when I overtakes Uncle Sammy I'll make the fur fly."

Slowly, for even then some of them were a little dubious about Jim, the crowd crept back, and presently our hero was surrounded by an admiring audience, who listened to his wonderful story of adventures by sea and land.

"It knocks me," murmured one.

"Did you ever?" said another.

"My land alive!" ejaculated a third.

"I want ter know!" piped a fourth.

"Ain't yew givin' it tew us rayther stiff?" said the deacon, when Jim related how he had found the two thousand dollars. "Yewr Uncle Sam hadn't much cash tew spare when he quitted here. He owes me five cents now."

"Oh, that's all in my eye," said the boy. "I tell you, deacon, Uncle Sammy has made a pile out of me somehow. I may be highfalutin' and given to blowing a little, but I never tell a down-right lie."

"Your uncle was mistaken," said the old man, who could not bring himself to believe that Sam had been guilty of the crimes imputed to him. "If yewr Jim, he was mistaken."

"What made him slope off like that?" demand

ed the boy, looking around at his girl friends. "There's a conundrum fer you."

"Grief at yewr supposed loss," decisively replied Provis.

"Grief at my hoop-de-dooden-doo," laughingly answered the lad. "Uncle Sam's like you; he never howls over the loss of anything but his money. Owes yer five cents, don't he?"

"Thank yew," snapped the deacon, rising. "Thank yew. After that I'll go. Yes, he dew owe me five cents. I'll go now."

"Nobody wants you ter stop, as I know of," saucily replied Jim. "None of us will mourn your absence—we can get along quite nicely without you."

"Friends," solemnly observed Provis, rising angrily and pointing to Jim, "I don't believe that young fellow is Sam Bags' nephew. He's an impostor."

"Oh, go along," chuckled Jim. "I've got a strawberry mark which every boy in Bagsville knows. Yer can't bluff H. J. B. Go an' put yer head in a sack."

"Show yewr mark!" snappet Provis, who was as mad as a cat, for hereto he had been much consulted as a wise man in all things, but his reputation was at stake.

If he only could bring discredit on Jim's story he would gain a big victory, but the boy was too smart for him. Rising, our hero said:

"Scuse me, deac, what was that you asked?"

"If yew're Jim Bags," savagely returned the old man, "I demand that yew prove yew're identity."

Choking a laugh, Jim pretended to be horrified, and, addressing Provis, said:

"Stiffin me, deac, I'm regular downright astonished at you. Why, my mark is on my back! Now do you think it would be proper for me to exhibit it before all these ladies?"

"He-he-he!" giggled the girls.

"Haw-haw-haw!" laughed the boys; while one, more saucy than the rest, cried:

"Got him dead, Jim! Rah!"

"Yew're an impostor—an impostor!" angrily observed Provis. "You've heard of this from the newspapers, an' because you resemble poor Jim, you've come here tew make trouble. As one of the select men of this town, I order yew to quit it in twenty-four hours."

"All right, deac. Don't get waxy," said the scamp. "I'll go when I've found the trail leading to your dear friend, my Uncle Sammy."

"You'll go before—sir. You'll go to-morrow!" frothed the old idiot, but Jim only laughed at him, saying:

"Oh, wipe off your slobbery chin!" whereupon the angry man cleared out, leaving the boys and girls to enjoy our hero's return.

"How about your railway?" inquired a pretty girl. "I want a posish as telegraph operator."

"Thought you were coming back a millionaire, Jim?" laughingly observed another. "Where's your millions?"

"Don't you worry, sis," winked the boy. "I'm going to fetch 'em somehow."

As the party was breaking up, old Sally said to him:

"Jim, you can stay here to-night. I'll make you a shake-down in the post-office. There's no hotel here, you know."

"Thank you, kindly," said the boy, and in a few moments they were alone.

"Jim," whispered the old woman, as she made up his bed, "I can tell you where your Uncle Sam has gone."

"Where?" he demanded.

CHAPTER XX.

IN WHICH JIM FALLS OUT WITH SALLY COMBS.

SALLY placed her hand on Jim's shoulder, then said, in an earnest tone:

"Yew won't go back on me, if I tell yew, hey? It's an official secret!"

Sal had a great respect for her position, and, though often dying to let out its mysteries, was too good a postmistress to betray her trust.

"Go back on you?" said Jim, wondering what was coming; "certainly not."

Proceeding to her desk, Sally brought out a copy of her "Registered Letter List," and pointed to an entry, as follows:

"McKillick & Burroughs, San Francisco; Samuel Bags, Bagsville."

Jim read this, then observed:

"Well, does that show where he's gone?"

Sally nodded triumphantly, saying:

"I didn't tell yew, mind?"

"All right, aunty," grinned Jim. "So you think that my beloved nunk has gone to—"

"Hush!" she whispered; "Provis may be round."

"I don't care if he's square," chuckled the boy.

"He's an old mutton-head, anyhow."

Sally screwed up her mouth and nodded, then said:

"Yew've made a bitter enemy of the deacon."

"Oh, I'll sweeten him to-morrow," replied Jim.

"I'll pay him them five cents that Uncle Sammy owes him," after which, resuming the topic of his relative's whereabouts, he added: "Is this all the proof you have?"

"No-o," cautiously answered the old woman, who in addition to being post-mistress, was the telegraph operator at Bagsville. "He sent a tal-grum."

"What was it about?" breathed Jim.

"It puzzled me awfully," said Sally. "I laid awake a hull night thinking ov it over, an' until now, couldn't understand it a bit."

"Well, spit it out," grinned the boy. "Guess I can explain it."

"Yew'll swear never to reveal who told you?" mysteriously demanded Sal, bringing forward her family Bible. "Yew'll put yewr hand on this, an' solemnly swear never tew reveal what I communicate?"

"Like a bird," said Jim. "I see there wasn't no occasion fur me to go to the old witch at Surinam; you can do my little biz equally as well."

"How," she snapped, "call me an old witch! yew sassy little cuss, yew," with which she picked up the book and papers, and retreated to the inner room, slamming the door between them and muttered angrily: "Arter all I've done for him, the ongrateful little wretch calls me an old witch!"

"Here, Miss Combs," breathed Jim through the keyhole, "don't git mad; I didn't mean to make you waxy."

"Go to bed," she snarled. "I believe that Deacon Provis is right. Highfalutin' Jim Bags would never have been so imperdint."

Now, though our hero was burning to know the contents of the telegram, the indignant old woman resolutely refused to say another word that night, so he was obliged to retire to his shake down, where he stretched himself out and thought until he fell asleep.

When he awoke in the morning, old Sally was preparing breakfast.

Dressing quickly, he knocked at the door, which she opened with a jerk, whereupon he smiled, and said:

"Miss Combs, you won't be hard on a poor little orphan boy, will you?"

This made the old lady laugh, and, after scolding him a while for his impudence, she said:

"Go an' get me in some kindlin. Gess there's no mistake; you're Highfalutin' Jim, sure enough."

"Show you my strawberry mark if yer like, aunty," he chuckled; upon which she laughed and threw a dish-cloth at his head, crying:

"Blame yew, don't sass me."

She was a real kind-hearted old woman, and had felt truly sorry when she heard of Jim's death.

The boy brought in the wood, and, after stacking it behind the cook-stove, inquired:

"Can I fetch the mail from the depot for you?"

"Ye-a," she nodded; "an' bring up my papers, will yew, Jim?"

Promising to attend to all her business the lad started for the depot, where he found the ticket clerk sorting the express parcels.

At first the young man seemed inclined to bolt, but Jim soon assured him that he was himself; then, procuring the mail and a heap of papers, ran back to the post-office.

In turning over the *New York Herald*, he saw a column headed:

"HIGHFALUTIN' JIM BAGS.

"A WONDERFUL STORY IF TRUE."

"Look here," he cried, "I'm in the papers!" Then, to the astonishment of old Sally, read out his own statement, which had been worked up and embellished by the reporter, who had interviewed the clerk at the St. Nicholas Hotel, and Jim's late host at the boarding-house.

The worst of it was, the statement ended rather doubtfully, as follows:

"Such is the story of Highfalutin' Jim Bags, who is, in our opinion, either a much-wronged boy, or one of the most accomplished young hum-bugs of the century."

"You see," said Sally, "even the newspapers feel a little doubtful about you."

"That reporter feller has stuck a lot on to what

I stuck on," growled Jim. "I never said that I killed two buckets full of rats at Nick Reddy's, or that I knocked Sly Charley on the head and chucked him overboard."

"Hum!" chuckled the old woman, "that's what comes of being so highfalutin'. You'd best tone down, Jim."

"Shoo!" laughed the boy, "I can't; it's in my blood, Miss Combs. Now come, tell me what was in that telegram."

The postmistress closed the door, pulled down the window-shade, and, handing him her telegram record, said:

"Read number seventy-eight."

CHAPTER XXI.

TELEGRAM NUMBER SEVENTY-EIGHT.

JIM took the paper and read out:

"Bags—to McKillick and Burroughs—He is dead. Have written particulars—will come with proofs—I am the sole heir."

"What do you make out of that?" breathed the old woman.

"Stiffen me if I know!" answered the puzzled boy. "What do you think?"

"That the body sent on here wasn't your father," said Sally. "We thought that corpus as yewr Uncle Sam brought hum was yew. Yewr mother could never quite bring herself to believe that the body the miners sent here was yewr father's."

"Dern it!" murmured the boy, "what a queer world this is; when you do think folks die, they don't, and when they do kick the bucket, you can't believe it. Sometimes I fancy that life is all a dream."

"Well, what are you going to do about this?" she asked. "Why don't you exhume your father's body and satisfy yewrself?"

"What good would yankin' pop up do?" he mused. "I couldn't tell him from Adam. No; I'll set out in search of my good, kind uncle, an', you bet, Miss Combs, I'll fetch him somehow!"

"Mind he don't murder yew," said the postmistress. "They say that out there in California, they think nothing ov shewtin' a man down at sight."

"I shall carry a pistol," cried Jim, attacking the breakfast with vigor. "Bless me; I ain't afraid of Uncle Sammy. He'll wilt right clear down, when he sees me. He's a regular cur, he is. Why, once, just afore I quitted here, he started to lick me for not clearing up the loft, when I off jacket and sailed into him two ten—gave him two black eyes an' a bloo—"

"Stop-stop! you highfalutin' rascal," she cried. "Yewr uncle hasn't had a black eye in years, an' as for yew whipping him, why he could kill yew. Now yew can't stick yewr highfalutin' stories inter me."

"Well," grinned Jim, as he assisted himself to a fresh slice of pork, "I'd have blacked both of his eyes if he hadn't apologized, stiffen me if I wouldn't."

"Jim," solemnly observed the old woman, "can't yew drop yewr tall way of talking?"

"What?" he said, "tone down an' be the same as other folks? Not fur Jimmy," adding: "Bless yer, Miss Combs, I kean't alter my nature. I'm Highfalutin' Jim Bags. It's in me breed."

"Well," muttered the old girl to herself, "they du say that your father was considerable of a blower—so, guess it's croppin' up in yu."

"I'm going to see friends here for a day or two," he observed, "then I shall get you to sign a paper to say that I'm the original 'H. J. B.' We'll yank that fraudulent corpse up, for I don't mean to have any strangers buried with my people—guess father an' mother feel right mad about it—then we'll bury him decently, and I'll start for California!" saying which, he wrote down the lawyer's address, then finished his breakfast.

After dressing in his best, he called on his old school teacher, who recognized him, and at his request, drew up the following document:

"We, the undersigned inhabitants of Bagsville, New Jersey, hereby certify that the bearer of this is James Bags, nephew of Samuel Bags, late of this city, and that the body buried, by mistake, by the aforesaid Samuel Bags, is not that of our young townsman, James Bags."

This was signed by the teacher, who giving his scholars a day's vacation, started out with our hero to call on the principal inhabitants—Jim's schoolmates and chums signing another document relative to his "strawberry mark," as he described a red blotch on his back.

When everybody but Provis had signed, Jim took the petition, and privately sought the deacon, saying:

"See here, deac, you'd better be in the fashion."

"Yew're an impostor," snarled the old man, who was no more a deacon than Jim was.

"What do you call yourself?" calmly asked the boy. "I call you a derved old fraud. What right have you to dub yourself deacon, eh?"

"My—my father was one," stammered Provis. "I ain't to blame ef folks call me by that title."

"Stiffen me, but you're cool," grinned Jim. "Now look here, deac, if you don't sign my paper cheerfully, and take back what you've said about my being a fraud, I'll bust yer old title—there."

Like most empty-headed humbugs, Provis was tickled with being called deacon. It sounded a chalk ahead of plain mister. So he yielded, but as Jim prepared to withdraw the old man piped:

"I don't believe yew're Highfalutin' Jim Bags enny more, because I've signed thet—un'stan'?"

"Oh, pull down yer old duck vest," laughed our hero. "You can think as you like," adding: "I knowed I'd fetch you somehow!"

"Did yew?" snapped Provis; then when Jim was gone, he harnessed his horse, and drove to the telegraph office at Bagsville Corners, where he dispatched the following telegram:

"SAMUEL BAGS; California House, San Francisco. An impostor, resembling your nephew, James, asserting himself to be your said nephew, is here. He proposes to go to California. Look out for him—he means mischief. PROVIS."

The body, buried as that of Jim, was duly exhumed, and on seeing it, our hero cried:

"Stiffen me if the corpse hasn't got side whiskers!" when, sure enough, there they were.

Provis, who was present, entered a protest against the removal of the dead man, but the townfolk would not listen to him.

One fine morning Highfalutin' Jim started for California, a host of friends seeing him off.

"I'm going to interview my dear, loving Uncle Sammy," he cried, as the train rattled up. "I'll come back with my fortune an' give you a big picnic."

"Will yew?" chuckled old Provis. "We'll see—we'll see!"

CHAPTER XXII.

IN WHICH H. J. B. CALLS UPON NICK REDDY.

IN due time Jim arrived in New York and took his ticket for San Francisco, after which he purchased a neat revolver.

As the train did not leave until evening, he thought that he would look Nick Reddy up and try and get back his money.

Sauntering down to the rum-mill he entered the bar, advanced to the counter and ordered a cool lager.

Nick gaped at him, wondering where he had seen him before. No one else was in the place, and the barman was away for the day.

"Fine morning," he growled, pouring out the beer.

"Fust-class," smilingly answered Jim. "Don't you remember me, Mr. Reddy? I'm the b'y who boarded with you, in your cellar. Sam Bags' nephew—left a little sum of money in your care. I've come for it."

"How?" snarled Nick.

"I don't mind how you pay it to me," grinned Jim. "Uncle Sam's in custody for attempting to take my life, an' I've come to get my money an' warn you to clear out. It was real kind of you to save my stamps for me. You see I've got powerful friends—the mayor an' the governor of New York, an' I've seen the president, an' he says he'll take care that all those who conspired agin me shall be punished."

"How the dernation did you git back?" demanded Nick, who was more scared than he cared to show; "I thought you was drowned."

"Bless you, no," laughingly answered Jim. "It would take more than a crowd of New York bums to finish me. Didn't you see the *Herald* with the history of my adventures in it?"

"I never reads no paper," grunted Nick.

"Sorry for you, old pie," chuckled Jim, sucking at his lager, which the other wished he had the power to poison. "You ought to read the papers; they keep you posted; say, don't be long handing over that money, as I'm followed by two detectives all the time, an' if they saw me come in here, they'd take you up as Uncle Sam's accomplice."

"Ain't you lying like thunderation?" said Nick.

"Me lie!" cried Jim. "Why, what proof, man, do you want? You helped uncle to half kill me, you hid me in your derved nasty archway, and got a stinking body and rigged it up in my togs, an' have done enough to send you up for ten years; but as you took care of my money, an' promised to keep it for me, I don't want to give you away—un'stan'?" with which he went to the door, and looking up the street, added:

"Dern'd if them detectives ain't on the next block."

"Yer tryin' ter bluff me," said Nick.

"Good enough," answered Jim. "I tell you, old man, if you don't keep your word I'll go out an' give you away—straight off. I thought you was an honorable man. You want to bluff me, hey?"

Nick cursed and swore considerably, but Jim only smiled and whistled.

Taking out his watch, he said:

"Look here, old pie, I'll give you five minutes in which to produce my money. If you decline—dern you—I'll hand you over to the officers."

"Curse you!" savagely returned Nick, taking a revolver from a recess under the bar counter; but ere he could cock the weapon, Jim had covered him with his Smith & Wesson.

Like all bullies, Nick was a coward, and as his pistol was not loaded—it having been fired during a muss that had occurred the night before in his bar—he caved right away, and counting out the amount of which he had robbed Jim, threw it on the counter, saying:

"There's yer — money!"

"Bring it here to me civilly," said the boy, still covering him with his pistol.

"I'm be gol derved if I do!" snorted the rowdy.

"I'd advise you to," chuckled Jim, carelessly fingering the trigger of his revolver. "Come an' lay it down on the head of the cask, or I may shewt. Everybody is at dinner, an' if I was to leave you all in a heap behind your own bar, no one will miss or care for your loss."

"D—n your cheek!" snarled Nick.

But he advanced, placed the money as directed and retired, using the most awful threats against our hero.

Jim picked up the bills, pocketed them, and winking at the half crazy man, said:

"See here, you pimple-faced, crop-eared, pug-nosed, red-eyed, gob-mouthed, dirty-skinned bully, you! I swore I'd fetch you somehow, an' by thunder I've done it! I don't care two straws for all your chat, you mean, rum-soaked loafer, you! I'm Highfalutin' Jim Bags, un'stan' an' I'm going to send you up, dern you! I made up my mind to get my money from you, you cussed cur, an' I've bounced you out of it nicely. Now look out for me, I'm on your track," with which he backed out.

As he did so, Nick uttered a cry like that of a wild beast, then, seizing a bottle of ale, threw it with all his might at Jim's head; but the boy ducked, and the missive smashed into a thousand atoms against a telegraph post opposite the entrance, after which Nick almost had a fit.

He swore that he would kill our hero, and he was a man who generally kept his word.

Jim pocketed his pistol and walked off, bending his steps to his old boarding-house.

"See," he said to the landlord, "I've got my money out of that derved shark, Nick Reddy. Bounced him like a ball."

"You don't say!" ejaculated the man. "Have you really made him plank over?"

"A few," grinned Jim, whereupon he related his adventure with the bully.

"And you cheeked him right to his teeth?" demanded the man.

"Ye-a," nodded the boy. "I gave him a touch of my highfalutin' style. You bet I made him bile over."

"He'll murder you," said the other. "Nick Reddy is one of the most desperate rowdies in New York City."

Jim smiled, saying:

"Don't you worry, old hoss. I'm going to Californy to-night, an' as for my waxy friend, Nick, bless you, Jim don't trouble himself."

"Do you think that you'll find your uncle?" demanded the man.

"Ray-ther," smilingly replied Jim. "I'll fetch him somehow."

CHAPTER XXIII.

GETTING THE BEST OF THE BANDITS.

HIGHFALUTIN' JIM started from New York by the express, at ten P. M. that evening.

No one saw him off and he felt kind of dull, so, when the train got well under way, he began to chat with the conductor of the sleeping-coach, to

whom he related his history; producing newspapers and his certificates by way of proof; not contented with which he launched out into an account of his property, which he told the man was worth seventeen millions of dollars.

"I know your uncle," said the conductor, describing Sam to a hair; "he traveled with me over two months ago! He's a derved mean cuss!"

"You've got him to a fly-dot!" winked Jim. "I'm on his track, an' I'm goin' to shake the old skunk until he chucks up my money!"

"You'll have a hard time," said the man. "Frisco is a rough place for a boy; he'll employ counsel and say that you're an impostor!"

"Then I'll get him in a quiet place and punch his derved old nut," angrily returned Jim. "I think if I can bounce a rowdy like Nick Reddy, that a derved coward like Uncle Sammy won't give me much trouble, hey?"

"I don't know!" mused the other, adding: "It's past twelve o'clock—don't you want any sleep to-night?"

Jim took the hint and turned in.

The next morning the conductor informed a number of the passengers, as a profound secret, that Jim was worth seventy millions of dollars, and one told the other until our hero became a general object of interest.

It is wonderful what money or a reputation for being rich will do, and Jim soon found a host of friends.

As may be imagined he treated them to some of his highfalutin' stories, but they sucked them all in and fed him with flattery, until he almost began to believe his own yarns.

Soon after they left Fremont, on the Pacific Railroad, the passengers began to talk about the danger of stopping at some of the way stations, saying that the lawless miners, or rather the bullies who held the peaceful miners in terror, thought nothing of boarding a train and robbing the travelers.

Jim heard them, then observed:

"I'd like to see 'em rob me."

"What would you do?" inquired a tall, handsomely-dressed man, who had joined them at Council Bluffs, and who had been told of Jim's wealth, or rather, of his great expectations.

"Do?" echoed our hero. "Why, I'd bounce 'em."

The stranger smiled significantly, but did not reply.

At the next depot about forty men got aboard the train, six of them entering the sleeping coach and taking the seats that were temporarily vacant.

"See here, mister," observed Jim to a big-bearded fellow, who had unceremoniously seated himself by him, "that place belongs to my friend, Mr. Oliver K. Watkins, of Louisville."

At that instant the train slowed on account of displaced rails, then came to a standstill, whereupon the well-dressed stranger, who had joined them at the bluffs, gave a signal, on which the new-comers drew their revolvers, and, leveling them at the heads of the affrighted passengers, demanded their money, at the same time the rest of the gang were plundering in the other coaches. "Come, pan out," said the man to whom Jim had spoken about the seat.

"What do you take me for?" demanded the boy, who, when the passengers had chatted about the robbers, had slyly secreted his money in a piece of old newspaper, which he had dropped under the seat. "All my money is in checks."

"Hand the checks over, then," said the man. "Come, hurry up."

Jim slowly fumbled in his pockets and produced two brass baggage checks, which he gravely passed to the robber, observing:

"You must be a derved mean purp to rob a poor little orphan boy like me. I wonder you ain't ashamed of yourself; there's my checks."

By that time the robbers had cleared all the other passengers of money and valuables, and were ready to take themselves off.

"Look here!" angrily observed the man to Jim. "What the h—I do you mean?" at the same time tossing the checks on to the floor. "If you think that you can put up a joke on us, you'll soon find yourself stuffed with lead."

"Oh," chuckled Jim, "don't go on so to a poor little orphan. Wait until I come into my property, an' then I'll give you something. I ain't got any money, mister."

"I thought that you were worth seventy millions of dollars," said the ringleader, advancing to the spot. "Come, where is your money?"

"Well, at present," grinned the boy, "my millions are all in my eye," with which, taking up the crushed, dirty-looking newspaper containing

his currency, he laughingly added: "This is all I'm worth; take it."

"You travel on your cheek, don't you?" said the man, rejecting the tobacco-stained paper and proceeding to search Jim, who resisted like a little demon, at the same time slyly contriving to kick the newspaper under the seat. "I guess I'll take your watch and revolver. You're the highfalutin' youth who said he'd bounce us, hey?" with which he cleared Jim's pockets, and, spitting into his face, walked off with his gang, leaving the other passengers so scared that none of them dared to move.

Wiping his features, our hero said to his companions:

"Stiffen me, yer awful smart, ain't you? Why didn't you cheek 'em and resist, same as I did?"

"You did, didn't you?" they snapped. "Bounced 'em, hey?"

Jim nodded; then as the rails were again laid, and the train resumed its way, picked up the newspaper, turned to the scowling ones, and said, with a knowing wink:

"There's my money. I scrunched it up in this. I fetched them thieves, stiffen me if I didn't."

CHAPTER XXIV.

JIM BOLDLY TACKLES HIS UNCLE.

IN due time they arrived at San Francisco, and Highfalutin' Jim Bags proceeded to a hotel.

Being evening, he went to the theater, and after the first act, strolled into the bar where he ordered a drink.

As he raised it to his lips his Uncle Sam came behind him, and reaching over his head, helped himself to a cigar, at the same time observing to a short, swarthy-looking man who was with him:

"He ain't come, I reckon."

Raising his hand and grasping the outstretched wrist, Jim said:

"Out on the first base, Uncle Sammy. Here I am," then still retaining his hold, twisted around, and facing Sam, who turned deathly pale, added: "Stiffen me! who'd a thought of seeing you at the theater?"

Wrenching himself away, his uncle nervously demanded:

"Who are you?"

"Come now, Uncle Sammy," laughingly answered Jim, gazing around at the crowd that had rapidly swarmed about them, "don't you be a derved fool. I'm your nephew, Jim Bags—Highfalutin' Jim."

"You lie!" excitedly returned Sam, "I have no nephew, I never saw you before in my life."

"Oh, too thin—too thin," smilingly observed Jim, winking at the crowd. "This is my Uncle Sam Bags, of Bagsville; he's tried to make away with me out East, and has come here and taken my property."

"You're mad!" angrily exclaimed Sam, then appealing to his companion, said: "You know that this fellow is an impostor?"

"I do," answered the short, swarthy man, who was none other than McKillick, a well-known mining lawyer; then turning and addressing the now excited crowd, he said: "I opine that you are all pretty well acquainted with me; well, I give you all my professional and personal word of honor that this youth," pointing to Jim, "is an impostor; my advice to my client is, to instantly give him into custody, and to send him where he belongs—to prison."

This seemed to satisfy the crowd, and as the second act of the play had begun, they cleared out, Sam and his companion going with them.

"I'd advise you to vamoose the ranch," said the bartender, as Jim paid for his drink; "McKillick is one of our most celebrated criminal lawyers, an' a tough rooster to beat."

"But I am that critter's nephew, and he has robbed me of seventeen millions of dollars," indignantly replied our hero. "I ain't afraid of McKillick. Stiffen me, he don't bluff Jim."

"You drop it, young feller," counseled the man. "Even if your story is true, you haven't any show against McKillick."

"All right," said Jim; "you'll see. The odds may be against me now, but I'm bound to fetch him, somehow."

With which he turned away and re-entered the theater.

When the fourth act was over, Jim once more quitted his seat, and taking up his place at the door, watched for his uncle to quit the place, judging, correctly enough, that he would not remain and see the entire performance.

In a short time Sam came out, and on seeing

our hero, hurried past him, whereupon Jim followed.

"If he walks, I'll walk," murmured the boy; "if he rides I'll do the same. I'm going to shadow him home, an' if he won't own me, stiffen me if I don't give him such a pommeling as he never had before!"

It was a beautiful, starlight night, and plucky Jim had no difficulty in following his relative; indeed, Sam seemed to give him every chance not to lose him.

On—they went, until they arrived at a thickly built-over Chinese quarter, the denizens of which had nearly all retired for the night, although from some of the dwellings there issued sounds of Chinese music and quarreling.

Jim, who had never before seen such buildings, paused awhile, then murmured:

"Stiffen me, does Uncle Sam live here? How the blamed place smells. Wish I had a revolver;" then noticing that his relative was crossing to the shadow of a huge Joss-house, or Chinese church, built on the other side of the street, he followed him.

The edifice was silent and deserted, save by a Chinese watchman, who was crouching on the grand flight of steps and was snoring like a fog-horn.

Noticing that Sam had vanished into a recess, forming the approach to one of the basement doors, Jim moved after him, picking his way among a heap of rubbish that was strewn about the open space.

Pausing, he endeavored to peer into the gloom, but, failing, cried out:

"Look here, uncle! I want to have a chat with you! Say, where are you?"

"Here," said Sam, from the deep recess of the doorway, "I live here."

"Is this the California House?" demanded the boy, groping his way towards him and determined, once he got hold of Sam, not to let up until his uncle had acknowledged him, or he had given him a tremendous thrashing.

"Yes," said his uncle. "Come on. This is a private entrance!" with which he drew a short Chinese dagger from his sleeve, then, with closely compressed lips, and murder in his heart, awaited the approach of his victim.

Above, on the steps, snored the watchman, dreaming of wife and children in far-off China.

In the houses, on the other side of the street, night-lights, which the Chinese always burn in their chambers, twinkled like stars, but about Sam and his nephew all was darkness.

"Where are you, uncle?" once more demanded Jim. "Say, don't you think that you've treated me like a dog?"

With a cry of rage and a spring like that of a tiger, Sam rushed upon the boy and repeatedly drove the dagger into his body; then, as Jim sank groaning upon the ground, moved silently and swiftly away.

CHAPTER XXV.

IN WHICH JIM FALLS INTO GOOD HANDS.

JIM's exclamation awoke the watchman, who, rousing himself, cried:

"Watchee dat?" then, drawing a match from his pocket, lighted a Chinese lantern, and, descending the flight of steps, began to search in the direction of the sound.

Jim lay stretched out like one dead, with his head inside the porch of the basement, and the blood flowing in a crimson stream from his side.

The Chinaman, whose name was Chin-foo, soon spied him, and approaching the boy, bent over him, murmuring:

"Big peecee dulo makee, catchee fum-fum! S'pose Chin-foo no helpee, he die!" with which he took a big brass key from his girdle, and unlocking the door, raised our hero in his arms and carried him into a small room in the basement of the Joss-house.

This was where Chin-foo cooked, slept and lived.

It must not be imagined that all Chinaman are cheats and scoundrels—far from that. There are good and bad among them, just as there are with ourselves, as the writer of this story knows, he having lived many years in China.

Chin-foo was a good, honest man, who, because he could not get a living for his wife and family, in his own country, had sold himself to the Five Companies, and giving the money to his dear ones, had embarked for San Francisco. We do not think it just and right to our own working people that the Chinese should be imported to cut down the rate of native labor; but now that they are here, it is shameful to ill-treat them.

Chin-foo laid Jim upon his own bed, then

stripping off the lad's garments, examined his wounds.

All, save one, were merely punctures of the skin; but a deep gash on the left side looked ugly.

His first impulse was to raise an alarm and send for an American doctor, but remembering the hoodlums, the rowdies of San Francisco, who go for a Chinaman whenever they get a chance, he paused.

If he sought assistance of a surgeon, he knew the fact of Jim being wounded near the Joss-house would get into the newspapers, and that the hoodlums would swear that he had committed the deed; at the same time, if the boy's wound was dangerous, the poor fellow might die.

Taking a piece of smooth ivory, shaped like a knitting-needle, he probed the large wound, and to his delight, discovered that it ran clear through the fleshy part of Jim's side, and that it had not pierced the internal organs.

Staunching the wounds with cold wet rags, Chin-foo opened his trunk, fished out an American needle and some sewing silk, then rummaged for a bottle of *Lin-ho*, a sort of arnica, used by his countrymen to cure cuts and bruises.

Removing the cork of the vial, he poured some of its contents into the boy's wounds, then, pressing the edges together, skillfully sewed them up, during which operation Jim opened his eyes and faintly murmured:

"Where—am—I?"

"Hus—c—csh!" said the Chinaman. "You allee safee! No talkee talkee! Go sleepee! You allee litee now; me go watchee, you go sleepee."

Bewildered as he was, Jim could not but feel struck with his new friend's face, so he muttered:

"Stiffen me, you're a queer-looking cuss!" after which, weak from loss of blood, he laid his head on a bamboo pillow and closed his eyes.

Chin-foo watched him for a few seconds, then reaching a bottle from a shelf, poured a little of the contents of the flask into a cup, and that done, raised our hero's head and made him drink it, saying:

"You drinkee—you sleepee—by-by you bellee good."

Jim sucked in the stuff, which was what is termed sam-shoo, Chinese brandy; then, once more dropping his head upon the square pillow, fell asleep.

"Bellee goodee," said Chin-foo, covering him with a wadded quilt, adding in a whisper: "What for tiefee man try killee you, hey?" and, after listening awhile, in order to ascertain whether Jim breathed regularly, he stole away, and, locking the door, resumed his old place on the steps, wondering what had made the Melican man assault and half murder a strong, handsome youth like his visitor.

At daybreak Chin-foo opened the temple doors and trimmed the altar lamps, soon after which a Chinese priest arrived and dismissed him until the evening, whereupon he betook himself to his lodging in the basement, and turned in on the floor.

Jim was fast asleep.

It was almost noon ere either of them awoke, and, as Chin-foo arose, in order to prepare his meal of rice, Jim faintly said:

"Halloo, mister! Where am I?"

"You all litee!" smilingly answered his new friend, after which, in his best English, the worthy Chinaman related how he had found Jim, and told him not to worry, that he was safe there.

"Stiffen me!" said the boy, "this is blamed comical. I don't believe that I'm made to be killed by Uncle Sammy. Dern his skin, when I get alongside him next time, I'll fix him;" then turning to the smiling Chin-foo, inquired:

"Where's my clothes?"

The man showed him the bloody garments, and Jim, reaching out his hand, found that his money was correct.

Taking out his wallet he placed it in Chin-foo's hands, saying:

"This is all I'm worth now. I know you're honest, Mr. What's Yer Name?"

"Chin-foo," said the Chinese.

"Chin-foo," murmured Jim to himself. "What a deuced queer name!" Then addressing the man, continued: "Now, friend, you take care of that for me, and when I get my money—I'm worth seventeen millions of dollars—I'll make your fortune—savvey?"

The Chinaman's eyes opened wide, and stowing the wallet in his trunk, he nodded knowingly, saying:

"I'm savee—all same slebentine tousan' dollar—hi—yaw!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN WHICH OUR HERO CONSULTS THE LAWYERS.

CHIN-FOO busied himself about his guest, made him some tea, and pressed him to eat some rice; but Jim was too much weakened to tackle any of the latter.

"You're a good man," he said to his friend; then, as the Chinaman bade him "sleepie sleepie," he turned over, and fell to thinking.

All his life seemed to pass before him, and it comforted him to think that, in spite of his uncle's unnatural treatment, he was alive.

His host was kindness itself, procuring suitable food for him and treating him like a brother.

Two weeks passed ere Jim was able to get about, but, finally, he found himself quite recovered and said that he would try a little walk.

Chin-foo had brushed his clothes and washed his linen for him—for, during his sickness, he had worn his friend's garments—so Jim looked quite respectable. When our hero had dressed himself and received his money, he turned to the man and inquired:

"Say, Chin-foo, how much do you get a month for watching this place?"

"Eight dollar," said the man. "Me free now—me no b'long to Five Companies. Me spendee four dollar; sendee four dollar home to my wiffee an' chile."

"I tell you what I'll do," said Jim. "I want some one to help me. You're smart, an' can understand English. I'll give you ten dollars a month an' find you, an' when I come into my fortune I'll give you a thousand dollars an' send you home to your wife an' young uns," on hearing which Chin-foo's eyes brightened.

Telling Jim that he would gladly accept his offer, he sought out his employers, and, obtaining his discharge, returned to our hero; then, taking his trunk, followed him out of the building.

At first the boy was weak and dizzy, and, as there were no public carriages in the Chinese quarter of the city, he had to walk some distance; but finally they reached a street where they procured a vehicle, in which Jim and his man were driven to the hotel.

"Why, where have you been?" exclaimed the clerk. "We were afraid that something had occurred to you."

Jim said that he had met with an accident, and that he had engaged Chin-foo as his attendant and would want a second room, near his own, for the Chinaman. Then, supported by the latter, retired to his chamber. Moving had shaken him up a little; but, after resting for a day, he felt all right again.

Little by little he contrived to filter his story into Chin-foo's mind, but it was tough work, and the Chinaman never got to understand that Jim would be likely to own more than seventeen thousand dollars. The millions were too much for him.

He was not a highly-educated celestial, and big figures staggered him. Still he was a clever, smart fellow, and quickly learned that Jim had a bitter enemy in his Uncle Sam Bags.

Chin-foo took our hero's currency to a Chinese money changer, who did not skin him of any more profit than an American would have done, and Jim found himself owner of gold in lieu of paper.

As soon as he was thoroughly well he went to a lawyer, to whom he told his story, saying:

"Now, mister, if you like to take the job in hand, I'll pay you handsomely."

"But I want a retainer," said the gentleman. "I cannot take your case unless you secure me payment. It will cost a fortune to upset your uncle's claim; besides, how do you know that he has any money of yours?"

"Oh, I'm sure he has!" cried Jim, but the lawyer could not see the matter in his light, so the lad retired, saying: "You'll be sorry for this, mister, when I come in for my seventeen millions. I'm bound to fetch 'em somehow."

The fact was he began to know the value of ready money, and as he had only about nine hundred dollars, gold, did not wish to part with it.

"Stiffen me!" he murmured, as he quitted the place. "I'll go an' call on McKillick and Burroughs," with which he inquired his way to the office of those lawyers.

McKillick was away, but Burroughs, an old, sharp-featured, eastern man, was in.

"Well," he snapped, as Jim announced who he was, "I haven't anything to say to yew!"

"But I have a lot to say to you, mister," smilingly observed Jim. "You don't want it known that you does lawyerin' for a thief an' a would-

be-murderer, hey? Come now, you're a gentleman—hear what I've got to say."

"My time is too valuable," snapped the lawyer.

"What is it worth an hour?" demanded the boy.

"Fifty dollars," curtly answered Burroughs.

Jim counted out fifty dollars in gold, and laying them on the lawyer's desk, said:

"Listen to me for an hour, mister."

Burroughs swept the money into a drawer, then, leaning back in his chair, said:

"Go ahead, young fellow," with which Jim began his story, and, avoiding all highfalutin' embellishments, told it clear up to the time of his entering the room.

When he ended, Burroughs said:

"I that all?"

"Ain't that enough to hang him?" cried the boy.

The wily old lawyer gave a dry smile, then observed:

"I decline to commit myself by an opinion."

"Can't you tell me anything about my property?" said Jim.

"Nothing," answered the lawyer; "I do not know that you have any."

"Can't you tell me where Uncle Sam's property is?" said the determined boy.

"I am Mr. Bags' lawyer," slowly replied the old fox. "It is not my business to betray his affairs."

Jim arose, went to the door, and after ascertaining that no one was listening outside, turned to the lawyer, saying:

"You're a mean, dirty old snark—that's what you are, but look here, mister: I'll fetch you somehow, stiffen me if I don't!" saying which he withdrew.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A QUEER OLD WOMAN AND A NICE YOUNG GIRL.

JIM returned to his hotel and thought over the matter, being determined to find out his uncle's property.

"I'll go to the Californian!" he cried. "Perhaps my dear, loving relative is there," saying which he went out and purchased a revolver and cartridges, then bent his steps towards the Californian House.

"Samuel Bags ain't here," answered the clerk, in reply to Jim's inquiry. "Left two weeks ago."

"Do you know where he has gone?" asked Jim.

"East, I believe," returned the clerk.

"Hasn't he some property hereabouts?" persevered Jim, who was bent on getting at Sam somehow.

"He has a big lot of government bonds," said the clerk, "but I don't know if he has any real estate about here. He's a mean man."

"How long did he board here?" asked Jim.

"Ever since he came from the east," replied the man. "I gave him the best room on the first floor, No. 3 A, and he never so much as asked me to take a drink with him."

"Is that room vacant?" said our hero.

"Yes," nodded the clerk. "It is a splendid apartment, with a parlor and a bath-room attached, only seventy-five dollars a week with board for gentleman and Chinese servant; that's how we always allot it."

"I'll take it," quietly observed Jim. "There's a week's board in advance. I'm Sam Bags' nephew, J. Bags. He's robbed me out of my fortune, several millions of dollars."

"You don't say?" observed the clerk, giving Jim the pen and turning the book towards him.

"Sign your name here, sir. You don't resemble Mr. Bags much."

"No," chuckled our hero; "I ain't so derved alfred homely as Uncle Sammy."

The man laughed.

Within an hour Jim and his servant, Chin-foo, were settled in their new quarters, and our hero had begun his investigations.

"Now, Chin-foo," he said, "you must tackle the Chinese servants, while I hunt around among the guests for evidence—savvey?"

"Hi, yaw," replied the Chinaman. "Me talkee all same pleeceman."

"Right you are," answered Jim. "Stick it into 'em, an' find out all about what Uncle Sam did."

When the dinner gong was sounded, he descended to the public table, Chin-foo waiting upon him, and keeping his eyes and ears open.

Opposite to Jim were seated a very pretty girl, about sixteen years of age, and an old woman, whom she addressed as grandmama.

Soon after they had taken their places, Jim heard the woman say:

"It is strange that Mr. Bags don't write." "Halloo!" thought the boy. "Mr. Bags! Wonder if she means my beloved uncle?" when the girl replied:

"I don't care, grandmama, whether he writes or not. I hate him! He's a horrid, mean, dreadful old man, and you needn't imagine that I'm going to marry him, for I won't."

"Violetta!" severely whispered the old cat, looking as though she would like to scratch the girl's eyes out, "Violetta, people are listening."

"I don't mind," quickly returned the angry beauty. "If I had a brother, or one friend in the world who cared for me, I wouldn't stay with you for a minute. I tell you, grandmama, it's useless for you to talk to me about Mr. Sam Bags."

Jim's ears stretched like those of a listening jackass, but nothing more was said either by the young or the old woman, who, presently, arose and quitted the table.

Sending for the head waiter—an American—our hero inquired the names of the pair, and was told:

"Mrs. Johnson and Miss Violetta Maspoli."

"Calls the young lady her granddaughter," whispered the man, "but she ain't; the gal's an Italian by birth. I know the old cat; she's snide, but, bless you, the little un don't know it. She adopted her out of an institution in the east, an' brought her on here. The little lady is as good as she's pretty."

"Can you come up to my room presently?" said Jim.

"Yes, sir; when the dinner is over," replied the man.

"I'm gone on that gal," murmured the boy, as he reached his apartment. "Dern it, fancy Uncle Sammy having the thundering cheek to think she'd marry him!"

As Jim was puffing at a cigar, Chin-foo entered, saying:

"Headee waitee wauchee you?"

"Show him in," smilingly replied the boy.

"Say, Chin, my son, keep your ears open."

"My ear openee all timee," chuckled the Chinaman.

In a few moments the head waiter entered, and taking a cigar offered him by Jim, said:

"I hear that you're old Sam Bags' nephew?"

"I am," replied the boy. "So uncle intends to marry Miss Maspoli?"

The waiter told all about Sam's doings at the hotel, winding up with:

"And that grey-headed, mean skinflint actually offered twenty thousand dollars to the old woman if she would persuade the young lady to marry him."

"I'm mashed on her," said Jim.

"So I guessed," laughed the man, whereupon Jim related his adventures, saying:

"Uncle Sam has robbed me of seventeen millions of dollars."

"Hum!" murmured the waiter. "You'll never get him to give it up."

"No?" laughed the boy. "I'm seventeen today, an' you bet before I'm a year older, I'll be in possession of my property."

"Hope you will," answered the man. "I'm afraid you'll never do anything against McKillick an' Burroughs! Well, I must go, good luck to you."

Giving him a ten-dollar gold piece, Jim thanked him for his information, after which the head waiter withdrew.

"I'll write to her," murmured our hero. "I'll fetch her somehow!" and seating himself at a side table, began a letter to Miss Maspoli.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE RESULT OF THE LOVE LETTER.

THIS was what Jim wrote:

"Room No. 3 A, Californian House, 'Frisco., 18-. MISS VIOLETTA MASPOLI:

"The writer of this, James Bags, Esquire, of Bagsville, N. J., nephew of that venerable object of your contempt and derision, old Sam Bags, desires a private interview with you. During dinner I overheard your noble, courageous, glorious, splendid words of defiance to the old she-cat who calls herself your grandmother. Pshaw! as if such a lovely, sublime, heavenly rose of beauty as you could belong to an old pie like her; the idea is perfectly ridiculous.

"Defrauded out of over seventeen millions worth of real estate and other property by that miserable screw-faced old scoundrel, my Uncle

Sam, I hasten to offer my services, my life to you. I am only seventeen; but I'm a man; have killed several people in my time, and been through fire and water, all caused by that bummer, my uncle. Excuse the last term, but I cannot find any other to apply to him. Believe me, dear Miss Maspoli, when I first saw your lovely, black eyes, your glorious, raven locks, your beautiful, angelic face, I was struck all of a heap. This is not intended as a love letter, but, if you won't smile on me, I'll go down to the bay and swim out and drown myself, then there will be an end of your obliged friend,

"JAMES BAGS.

"P. S.—I send this by my Chinaman, Chin-foo—he is a very nice fellow. If you do not wish to write an answer, tell him where you will meet me.

Your adoring

"J. B.

"P. S.—Your eyes, as black as sloes,
Have knocked me in a heap;
Reduced me to a skeleton,
And robbed me of my sleep.

"J. B. (original.)

"P. S.—Don't think that I'm crazy, dear Miss Violetta Maspoli. I can write better poetry than above, but, just now, the thought of you at the mercy of my designing Uncle Sam makes me rather shaky. Please tell Chin-foo whether I can see you this evening.

J. B."

"There!" he exclaimed, as he folded the letter. "That's rather highfalutin', but the gals like a high-flown style." Then, handing it to Chin-foo, said: "Take that to Miss Maspoli—mind, give it to her—don't hand it to that old batter-pudding, her grandmother."

"Me savvy," winked Chinfoo, who thoroughly entered into the sport of the affair. "Littee lady hab catchee one peecee boy name Sung-soon—me know he—he come out sidee room; me gib he chit (letter), tell he to gib to Missee Ma-polly. High yaw! me savvy bellee good."

"Go ahead, then," said Jim, who was in dead earnest. "I'm bound to fetch her somehow."

The Chinaman departed on his mission, and soon returned, saying that it was all right, and that Sung-soon had promised to hand the letter to the young lady.

"But I want an answer," snapped Jim. "Go and wait around their rooms until you get one."

Chin-foo retired and Jim lighted a cigar.

Being in love made him reckless and feverish.

Little did he imagine that the wily Sung-soon was in the pay of Mrs. Johnson, and that the latter lady was reading and raving over his epistle.

She had given her servants strict orders to deliver all communications addressed to her adopted grandchild to her, and, as the Chinaman received his pay from the old lady, and Jim had not sent a fee by Chin-foo, the letter was duly handed to Mrs. Johnson.

For some time the latter sat and read the comical effusion, then rising, went to a trunk, drew forth a cowhide, and sliding it up her sleeve, quickly withdrew, in her rage dropping the letter, which Miss Maspoli noticed and picked up.

It took the girl but a few moments to master its contents, and to decide what she would do.

Leaving her, we will return to Highfalutin' Jim, who had stretched himself out on a lounge and was impatiently awaiting a reply to his letter.

"I'm only seventeen," he murmured; "folks may think it rather young, but I'll marry her, if she will have me; guess she will; seventeen millions of dollars ain't to be sneezed at; stiffen me, jes' fancy Uncle Sammy's nerve to think that she would have him, when there's such a handsome, accomplished, graceful young feller around as H. J. B. It's perfectly sickening!" As he said this, he heard a sharp rap at the door, whereupon, without rising, he cried: "Come!" when in sallied Mrs. Johnson, her face the color of a pickled beet.

Jim, not seeing who it was, and naturally imagining that he had mistaken her room, chuckled and puffed out a thick cloud of smoke, but he quickly sat up when she said in a cold, sarcastic tone:

"Boy, is your name James Bags?"

"Marm?" he replied, rising and recognizing her, feeling in his heart his letter had miscarried. "Yea, my name is Jim Bags, marm—Highfalutin' Jim, marm."

To his surprise she began to fumble in her pocket for the letter, and as she did so, the cowhide slipped down her sleeve and fell upon the floor.

Stooping, our hero picked up the weapon, which he handed to her, saying:

"You've dropped your thingumbob, marm."

"Where—the—deuce—is—that—letter?" she muttered, nervously, fumbling in her pocket with her left hand, as with her right she grasped the whip. "Where did I put it?"

"Stiffen me if I know," snarled Jim, beginning to back toward the inner room. "It's a cowhide, ain't it?"

"Well, never mind!" she shrieked. "It's of no consequence at all;" then, raising the weapon aloft, uttered a cry of rage, and advancing upon our hero, said: "I'm going to lambaste you, boy."

As she was about to carry out her threat, the door was partly opened by Miss Maspoli, and the barrel of a revolver thrust into it, the intruder crying:

"Stop, grandmama, or I'll fire."

CHAPTER XXIX.

VIOLETTA.

MISS MASPOLI was on her muscle.

She had noticed Jim at the dinner-table, and had fallen dead in love with him.

On reading the letter, she had taken out Mrs. Johnson's revolver and had followed her to room No. 3 A.

"Do—do—don't fire!" falteringly answered the old woman in reply to her summons, at the same time dropping the cowhide. "I was only—jo—jo—joking."

Jim advanced, picked up the weapon, and presenting it to Miss Maspoli, stammered out something about having saved his life; but the girl, who was almost confused as her lover, scarcely heard a word; meanwhile the old woman sallied out of the apartment, snorting like a buffalo and inwardly vowing to be revenged upon Jim.

The head waiter's description of Miss Violetta Maspoli was a correct one. She was as good as she was beautiful.

At an early age she had been abandoned in the streets of New York, taken to a charitable institution and reared by the good sisters, who, trusting to Mrs. Johnson's supposed wealth and profuse promises, had consented to the pretty girl's adoption by the old woman, who was merely an adventuress.

For some moments Jim and the young lady stood like images, with their eyes downcast, but at length our hero summoned enough courage to say:

"Good-evening, miss. Fine weather, ain't it?"

"Good-evening, sir," faltered Violetta. "Yes, very fine."

Then there was another pause.

For the first time in his life Highfalutin' Jim Bags was abashed.

To his intense relief just then Chin-foo entered, and seeing the young lady, was withdrawing, when Jim said:

"See if there's any one in the little parlor next to the grand reception-room."

"Allee empty," said the Chinaman. "Guestee allee gonee teater pidgeon."

Offering Violetta his arm, which she quietly accepted, Jim escorted her to the apartment named, and bidding Chin-foo remain at the open door, seated the young lady, then said to her:

"What did you think of my letter?"

Instead of replying, she uttered a low, musical laugh.

"Come to think of it, it was derved comical!" continued Jim, gradually recovering his usual calm confidence. "Did it make you laff, hey?"

Once more she gave vent to a merry, subdued peal of mirth, then said:

"I understood it, sir!" whereupon Jim eyed her admiringly, and observed:

"You're awful smart, you are, miss."

"Call me Violetta," she murmured. "I want you to be my brother."

"Bless you—I—I—I want to marry you!" stammered Jim, sinking upon one knee beside her, after the most approved style. Then, in his most highfalutin' fashion, told her that he loved her, and begged that she would become his wife, winding up with: "We are both orphans! We needn't wait to ask anyone, but send for a minister right away, and when Mother Johnson next sees you, you can say 'I'm Mrs. James Bags!' We don't want to be the two orphans any more."

"Oh, J—J—James," she merely replied, "don't be in such a hurry? I'm only sixteen, and I've said I never would marry until I discovered my poor father."

"Oh, I'll fix that for you!" cried Jim. "You marry me, dear Violetta, and I'll find out the old gentleman."

Bidding him rise, she said:

"Come, be reasonable, James. Those who marry in haste, repent at leisure!"

"Call me Jim an' I will," he whispered. "I'll call you Violetta."

"Well, I—ill," she answered, then told him the story of her life, how she had been abandoned by her mother, or some woman whom she supposed was that parent, and had been cared for and raised by the good sisters."

"How about your father?" inquired Jim.

Taking a square locket from her bosom, she opened the trinket and showed him a piece of paper on which was written:

"This child, Violetta Maspoli, is the daughter of Senor Giovanni Maspoli and Senorita Violetta Maspoli. I am compelled by want to abandon her."

"A regular romance!" said Jim; "why, both of us are in the same fix. Yes, we're the two orphans, sure enough. Your parents shook you and my uncle has tried to shake me, but I'm on his track. I'm bound to fetch him, somehow," saying which he told her all his adventures, then renewed his request that she should marry him.

"Jim," she said, drying her eyes, which had been filled with tears at his story, "I promise you that I'll never marry anyone else, but there's plenty of time for us to think about that. First of all, not that I care for your money, you must get your fortune out of your bad uncle's clutches, then I must find my father."

"And when we've done that, you'll promise to be Mrs. Jim Bags eh?" cried our hero, drawing her towards him and kissing her.

"Yes," she faintly whispered, "that is if you ask me!"

"You bet I will," he cried. "Now, after this, Violetta, we're engaged, you know!"

"Very well," she murmured. "I shall leave Mrs. Johnson and go into a convent until you come for me. I'm not safe with her."

"That's so," said Jim. "She's a regular old crow."

The next morning, spite of the old woman's protestations, Violetta quitted her adopted grandmother, and accompanied by Jim, proceeded to a convent on — street, where she was admitted as a boarder.

"Good-by, dear Jim," she said, as he kissed her farewell. "It's best for me to be here—you'll know that I'm safe. Now go and find your uncle, and God bless you, Jim; I'll pray for you."

Our hero turned and quitted her, murmuring: "I'll fetch Uncle Sammy, somehow, or I'll bust."

CHAPTER XXX.

IN WHICH JIM IS CAUGHT IN A NET.

It must not be thought that Mrs. Johnson tamely submitted to being deprived of her adopted grandchild. She had gone to great expense in having the young lady educated, and meant to pocket a large sum by Violetta's marriage; therefore her rage may be easily imagined.

Sam Bags, in addition to promising her twenty thousand dollars, had agreed to settle a valuable tract of land upon her, so it was no wonder that she kicked against Violetta's decision, and vowed to be revenged upon Highfalutin' Jim.

Her first move was to communicate with Sam, who was at his country residence, near Espinosa, some distance from San Francisco, and her next move was to endeavor to win over his nephew.

As may be conjectured, Jim was too smart for her, and this made her more bitter than ever.

While she was setting her nets, our hero was busily engaged in endeavoring to discover his uncle's retreat, believing, if he could only get hold of Sam, that he could compel him to do the right thing.

Numerous letters passed between Mrs. Johnson and Sam, but of course Jim was entirely ignorant of this correspondence, though, far from being idle, he had his ears and eyes open all the time, and Chin-foo proved an invaluable assistant.

Sam had been so cute that very few clues were found, but this much Jim learned, his uncle had gone southward.

One afternoon, Mrs. Johnson sent for Violetta's old servant, Sing-soon, and was closeted with him for over five hours.

The next day, Chin-foo received a letter in Chinese, bidding him to go to a low opium den in the foreign quarter, where he would learn something to his advantage.

The honest fellow, after consulting Jim, went and was accosted by a countryman of his, a good

natured fellow who sold segars on California street. This man told him that if he would bring Jim to the house that evening, he would take him to where Sam Bags was hiding.

Knowing the segar pedler was honest, Chin-foo believed his statement, and rushed back to our hero with the news, little imagining that the man was, like himself, a victim to a deep-laid plot, planned by Mrs. Johnson's tool, Sung-soon.

"You can trust that segar man, hey?" said Jim, as Ching foo told his story.

"Yes, he nombra one man!" said the Chinaman. "Me savvy he in Shanghai!"

It was arranged that Jim should go, and that evening about nine o'clock they started.

As a precaution against surprise, our hero had purchased another revolver for his own, and two

closed courtyard, the gate of which he fastened behind him.

"Don't walk so derved fast!" said Jim. "Stiffen me if I ain't wet through with sweat!"

Their guide paused for an instant, after which, mounting the steps of the center building, he said:

"Comee lon'."

Drawing their pistols, yet keeping them hidden from view, they followed the pedler into a large room, dimly lighted with Chinese lamps, the door of which was immediately secured behind them.

Quick as thought a crowd of cut-throats attacked them, whereupon Jim discharged his first revolver, then, backing against the wall, drew his second weapon and blazed away with that.

de oying his countryman and the young American into danger, he had crept into a corner and waited until a chance offered to assist them.

He was by no means a bad fellow—that segar man—and was plucky to boot.

As the vibrations of the earthquake died away, he crossed over to Jim, pulled the cotton batting out of the boy's mouth, and cut the net and cords that bound him; then, leaving our hero to uncurl, stepped towards Chin-foo and served him the same way.

In a short time, the late prisoners regained the use of their limbs, but, as the shocks had shaken out all the lights, they could not see how to escape.

Saying something to his countryman in Chinese, the pedler groped his way towards the door, followed by Jim and Chin-foo, who was as



As Mrs. Johnson raised the cowhide, Miss Maspoli pointed the revolver at her, and cried: "Stop, grandmama, or I'll fire!"

for Chin-foo's protection; in addition to which they were armed with daggers, which they secreted about them.

"Stiffen me if I'm going to risk being knocked on the head again!" chuckled Jim. "I've had enough of that."

He imagined that his uncle, afraid to face him, was skulking in the Chinese quarter, and thought to unearth him nicely, while really, Sam, who was the prime mover in the new plot to get rid of his nephew, was living at his ease near Espinosa.

The night was sultry, such as generally precedes an atmospheric disturbance, and the heat seemed to affect everybody.

Riding until they come to the Chinese part of the city, Jim alighted and followed Chin-foo, who, entering the opium den, presently returned with the segar pedler, saying:

"Here's the man!"

The fellow looked innocent enough, so Jim did not suspect danger.

"You savvy where Sam Bags is?" he said.

"High-yaw, me savvy!" nodded the man, who had been simply hired by Sung-soon to decoy his victims, "me savvy nombra one!" then led the way down a by-lane, the inhabitants of which were sitting before their doors and lolling out of the windows, fanning themselves and railing against the unusual heat.

Arriving at the bottom of this street, the segar pedler turned to the left, then entered an in-

As he was now used to attack, he did not feel flurried, his only fear being that he would shoot Chin-foo.

Several of the Chinese scoundrels fell, shot by him, and at one time he thought they would bolt and give him a chance to escape.

Every now and then he heard reports of Chin-foo's pistols.

As he discharged his last cartridge, a gigantic Chinaman rushed at him with a club, and knocked his revolver out of his hand.

In another instant he was secured and thrust into a big net, which the wretches tightly bound about him, at the same time filling his mouth with cotton wool.

In vain he endeavored to call out—he could see all that was done, but was powerless to resist.

"My God!" he thought, "I shall be smothered!" with which he uttered a dull cry. As he did so, the earth trembled, and the cut-throats darted, shrieking, from the building.

CHAPTER XXXI.

JIM MEETS A NEW FRIEND.

THE cause of the commotion was a severe earthquake, which, for some moments, continued to agitate everything that could be shaken.

Besides Jim and Chin-foo, but one person of the crowd had remained—the segar pedler.

Upon discovering that he had been fooled into

mad as a cat, and as full of fight as a bantam rooster.

When a Chinaman gets his monkey up he's real ugly, and Chin meant biz.

The cut-throats, fearing that the building would fall upon them, had rushed out into the public street and were utterly demoralized, so the little party emerged among them without being molested.

Most of the gang of Chinese scallawags were "chin-chining joss," i. e., they were on all fours, bowing or knocking their foreheads in the dust; that being their style of saying prayers.

Seeing Mr. Sung-soon in that attitude, Chin-foo and the segar man went for him, and yanked him on to his feet; then, ere the other rowdies knew it, had secured the cuss by binding his hands, after which, motioning to the segar pedler, Chin raised the rascal by the arms, while his companion seized the fellow's lower limbs, and nodding to Jim to follow, they toted Sung-soon off. When they were clear of the Chinese quarter, they handed him over to the custody of a policeman.

Earthquakes are so common in California that when the party arrived at the police headquarters, they found everything as quiet as though nothing extraordinary had occurred.

Our hero related his adventure, and charged the prisoner with having attempted to assassinate him; whereupon the fellow calmly observed, in

Chinese, that it was not his place to be there, as Mrs. Johnson had engaged him to attend to Jim's little business, and if there was any trouble, had promised to see him through.

"This looks fishy," said the chief of police, who happened to be in the office.

"She's a scaly old critter, anyhow," observed Jim. "She's in league with my uncle, who has cheated me out of seventeen millions' worth of fortune."

"Who is your lawyer?" inquired the official.

"I haven't got one," answered the boy. "They cost like forty, an' when you've done with 'em they bags all you get. I've made up my mind to do my own lawyering."

"Listen to me," put in the gentleman. "If your story is correct—"

"If!" cried Jim, when the chief stopped him, saying:

"Don't get mad. We meet with imposters at every turn. I don't doubt you. Well, if you can substantiate your assertions, I will introduce you to honest lawyers who will see that you are righted."

"What are their names?" demanded the lad.

"McKillick and Burroughs," said the official. "If anyone can find a flaw in it's McKillick, and if there's one man more than another in this state qualified to conduct such a case as yours, it's Burroughs."

"I know 'em," nodded Jim, "they're Uncle Sammy's lawyers," with which he related his experience with those gentlemen. When he concluded, the chief said:

"Boy, I'm sorry for you. Your story seems true, yet the odds are a thousand to one against you."

"I'll take 'em," chuckled Jim. "I've made up my mind to whip the crowd, an' I'll fetch 'em somehow; that's my motto."

After binding himself over to prosecute Sung-soon, and giving his word for the appearance of his man, Jim withdrew, leaving the pedler, for whom he would not become responsible. It was midnight ere he reached his hotel, and he turned in dead tired.

The next morning he read an account of his experience in the *Call*, which said that if he were not an imposter, some able lawyer ought to take up his case, as there was money in it.

"Ye-a—millions," he murmured, as he laid down the sheet and turned to his breakfast. "How is it that folks doubt me so? I'll ask Violetta."

Jim could not understand that his highfalutin' style made people suspicious of his story.

As he completed his meal Chin-foo came to him, saying:

"All littee—policee mans come for big pescee, Missee Johnson!" meaning that the officers had arrived to arrest the old woman.

"Time to start for the court-house, then!" said Jim. "We'll fix the old cat this pop!"

However, Mrs. Johnson had seen the account in the newspapers, and when the cops knocked at the door of her apartments, was far away on her road to join Sam Bags.

After hearing our hero's story, the justice decided to commit Sung-soon for trial, binding Jim over to appear against him and to produce Chin-foo.

The pedler was retained in custody.

As Jim was withdrawing, a crowd of lawyers approached him, offering their services, but he declined them all, saying:

"I can attend to my own business!"

However, on returning to his hotel, he received a note from the chief of police, recommending him, for his own sake, to call upon a firm named Strong & Quick—to whom he inclosed an introduction—so, taking his papers, he drove down to their address.

"Well, Mr. Bags!" said the senior lawyer, after our hero had recapitulated his story, "yours is a most extraordinary statement, but we do not see why it should not be true! One thing we would counsel you to do—don't be quite so highfalutin' in your descriptions."

"Stiffen me!" murmured the boy. "You notice it, do you?" then, nodding at them, observed: "All right, I'll try an' drop the highfalute!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

AN OLD FRIEND IN LUCK.

"Now that we are engaged by you," said the younger lawyer, "it will be as well for you to petition the court to appoint a guardian for your estate."

"But I haven't got it yet?" queried Jim, who did not relish the idea of being under control. "I don't want to plank over what I have to a guardian."

"Do not alarm yourself," laughingly answered Mr. Strong; "a guardian will not interfere with your personal freedom. It is simply a matter of law; you are not twenty-one, therefore, some one must act for you until you come of age."

"I'd rather wait a while," said Jim; "I want to find out where my property is; besides, I don't know any one here I'd like to trust it to."

The lawyer smiled, then telling him that there were thousands of honorable men in California, promised to see McKillick and Burroughs, and to forthwith commence operations against his uncle.

Rising, he said:

"You won't do anything with old Burroughs; he's a dead beat," then quitted the office.

Upon reaching his hotel he found a card, on which was written:

"CAPTAIN VON SKIMMELDECKEN."

"Where is he?" demanded Jim.

"In room twenty-five," said the clerk. "He is tired with his journey, and asked me to beg of you to go to him."

"With pleasure," said Jim, and mounting the stairs he knocked at the door of number twenty-five, saying:

"Halloo, cap!"

"Come in," cried his old friend, and in another moment they were shaking hands.

"I'm real glad to see you," said Jim.

"And I'm real glad to see you," echoed the skipper.

"How came you to follow me?" demanded our hero.

"Well, you see," said the captain, "when my ship was burnt, she was nearly all my property. I had no insurance on her, and her time had run out; so when I had satisfied my consignors that the fire was accidental, I was free to seek another berth. In hunting around for employment, I met with a countryman of mine who is largely interested in the towing trade of this harbor, the long and short of it is, my dear boy, I am engaged as a superintendent of the Van Cott Towing company on a big salary. I have sent for my wife and dear ones, and" (handing him a bag containing gold coins) "there is the amount of your kind loan, the debt of gratitude I never can repay."

"You're true grit, an' it's I who owe you a debt of gratitude," cried the delighted boy; after which, seating himself by his friend, he told his experiences since they parted, the skipper alternately looking grave and amused.

"You've had a number of narrow escapes," observed Von Skimmeldecken. "You have as many lives as a cat."

"I'm bound to fetch Uncle Sammy, dern him," cried Jim, "and I'm going to marry Violetta. I tell you, cap, she's a beauty and as sensible as—"

"You are highfalutin', hey?" good humoredly interposed his friend.

"Guess you're about right!" chuckled Jim. "I'm some on the highfalute, I know, but I mean well. Say, cap, will you be my guardian?"

"If you promise to be guided by my advice, I will," answered the skipper.

"I will in all but three things!" merrily answered our hero. "You won't interfere with my private actions—I won't give up Violetta, and I—"

—here he looked saucily at his friend—"I won't agree to go to Surinam to consult your old witch."

"And I won't ask you to do either," laughingly replied his friend. "When my wife arrives, Violetta must pay us a long visit."

As they were chatting, Chin-foo knocked at the door, and on being told to enter, came in, carrying in his hand a Chinese bill measuring over a yard in length, and about an inch in width.

He was evidently very angry about something, and could scarcely speak.

"Halloo, old man," cried Jim; "washing bill?"

In broken English, mixed with considerable Chinese, Chin-foo explained that the bill was a demand from the owner of the house in which his master and he had been assaulted, for a thousand dollars, the value of two Chinese killed by our hero.

"Dern his cheek!" grinned Jim. "Tell him to send the work home with the bill. He's trying to bounce me."

Chin-foo grinned, then quitted the room muttering:

"He too blame smart! No fooler Jimmee Bagee—no—he number one fust chop. He no kill pilong man—he only give 'em fum-fum."

The next day Jim petitioned to have a guardian appointed for his estate, and the court, at the recommendation of Messrs. Strong & Quick, named Captain Von Skimmeldecken, who gave

the necessary bonds, and from that time assumed the charge of our hero's affairs.

"Have you learned anything about my property?" demanded the boy of the lawyers, as they quitted the court house.

"McKillick and Burroughs are very non-committal," said Mr. Strong "but we believe that the real estate lies somewhere near Espinosa, and that it embraces some fine orange groves."

"Good enough," said Jim. "I'll send Sally Combs enough to stock her shop right along; I'm awful fond of oranges, an' so is Violetta."

"You leave this matter entirely to us," observed Mr. Quick; "we will investigate it thoroughly, and if all goes well, will obtain your rights."

"Meanwhile," thought Jim, "I'll investigate on my own hook."

So the next day he purchased a rifle, weapons for himself and Chin-foo, and a stock of ammunition; then giving out that he was going on a duck-shooting expedition, paid his hotel bill, left his spare baggage with his guardian, and quitted the city.

When the captain had asked him whither he was bound, he replied:

"Look here, cap, you said when I asked you to take charge of my affairs that you would not interfere with my private actions; now I'm going to do one of the latter," so the skipper laughed and let him go.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

OFF FOR ESPINOSA.

EMBARKING on board the San Jose Railroad, Jim started for his destination, which he reached about sunset.

Proceeding to the principal hotel, he registered, then made inquiry about his relative.

"Bags?" said the landlord. "Oh, yes, I know a Mr. Bags; he's the man who has come into a nice little property here, that was owned by some one who died down by Los Angeles."

"That's my property; it's worth seventeen millions of dollars," said Jim, a confident as though he had seen a real estate valuation.

"I opine not," drawled the man. "I offered this Sam five thousand for the hull estate, which adjoins mine, but he wouldn't take it."

"I should think not," indignantly observed Jim. "He's got no right to sell my land. Dern him, I'm going over to-morrow in order to shake him up."

"I don't believe that he's thar," said the landlord. "I opine he's started for Los Angeles with a fat woman, his sister."

"His grandmother!" cried Jim. "It's that old duck, Mrs. Johnson. I know her."

"Don't git mad," smilingly observed the man. "We'll ride over to-morrow an' see the rancho. Maybe, if it's yours, I kin deal with you for it."

Jim went to bed and dreamed of ranchos until daylight, when the landlord aroused him, and after partaking of a cup of coffee, they started for El Croix, the rancho where Sam had lately lived.

"Did you know the man who owned this?" demanded Jim, as they came in sight of the house, a neat, adobe building, surrounded by lovely trees.

"No," answered his companion; "he hasn't visited here for years. They say that he was a regular hermit, and that he passed all his time on his estate near Los Angeles."

Riding up to the front veranda, Jim bade Chin-foo ascertain whether Sam was at home, and presently, the Chinaman was pounding at the open door.

"This estate ain't worth more'n five thousand dollars," said the landlord, who had his eye on a dicker. "It's a mean place half the year."

Jim chuckled.

Just then a Chinawoman, a rare sight in that part of California, came to the door, and Chin-foo began to gabble away with her in his native language.

"Here, cheese that, Chin," cried Jim. "Ask her if she knows where my Uncle Sam is, Mr. Bags."

Once more they jawed away.

"I wish I knowed Chinese!" growled the boy. "I believe they're talking about all their relations in China!"

"She say Bagee no lib heree!" at length observed Chin-foo.

"Oh, dern it. Chin she said a deal more'n that?" snapped Jim.

The Chinaman nodded, saying:

"High-yaw, she say she see my wiffee an' chillee last year!"

"Just shut up your private biz, an' attend to

mine," snapped Jim, alighting from his horse; upon which the old woman vanished, and Chin-foo said:

"She too muchee frightened; you talkee—talkee too mad!"

"I'll ride on to my rancho, and will call for you in an hour," observed the landlord. "I told you that the old man had vanhoosed," with which he galloped off.

Presently, a clean-shaven Chinaman, who looked like a wax copy of Chin-foo, made his appearance, and was about to commence an animated conversation with Jim's man, when our hero interposed, saying:

"Stiffen me, Chin, if you don't drop chinning that cuss I'll sack you—there!" whereupon the Chinaman smiled and said:

"Me no wanchee sack, Mista Bagee."

Entering the house, which was elegantly furnished as a country residence, Jim seated himself, and addressing the Chinaman in charge, observed:

"I hereby take possession of this property!" whereupon the man said something to Chin-foo, hearing which Jim demanded: "What's he jawing about?"

"Me no likee say," grinned Chin.

"I want to know?" cried Jim. "Spit it out!"

The poor fellow vainly endeavored to be let off, but Jim was firm, saying:

"I ain't going to miss any points."

So, finally, Chin-foo reluctantly owned that his countryman had said:

"You too muchee foollee."

"Now, look here!" cried our hero, in his old highfalutin' style, "you just tell him, Chin-foo, that I'm the boss now, that if he don't mind his p's and q's, I'll histe him—un'stan'?"

"Me savey," replied the good-tempered fellow. Then, in an animated way, proceeded to translate his employer's speech, which seemed to afford the other Chinaman great amusement.

"What's he grinning at?" snarled Jim, who did not like the idea of being made fun of by his own employees.

"He say he no caree," said Chin-foo, endeavoring to swallow a smile. "He say he belong to one number one man, General Blownse, who hab catchee dis ranchee for five year. He no wanchee talkee you!"

"Uncle Sam's rented out this place for five years?" yelled Jim; "I'll bust the lease. I'm the owner of this rancho, I'll have you to know."

"He say he no caree one dammee!" calmly observed Chin-foo. "He say Samee Bagee wilo (gone to) Los Angeles."

Jim arose and paced up and down the room, while the Chinaman, who seemed to be old friends, chatted, smoked, and drank tea.

"Sold agin," he murmured; "dern Uncle Sammy's old skin! I shall be bald-headed afore I get my property! I mustn't let Violetta know how I've been bounced!" Then, turning to Chin-foo, said:

"Ask that high-toned rooster whether he knew the man who owned this place before uncle grabbed it?"

After a little chat, Chin calmly replied:

"He say he no knowee—he no caree?"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

JIM FINDS HIMSELF BALD-HEADED.

JIM did not wait for the return of the landlord, but mounted his horse, and reluctantly followed by Chin-foo, rode back to Espinosa, then took the first train for Salinas, and, descending the river, embarked on board a passing steamer for Los Angeles.

On the main deck sat a venerable Spanish priest, with whom our hero soon entered into conversation.

To Jim's delight the padre knew Los Angeles, and had a dim remembrance of a rich man who once owned large estates near the mission.

"Do you remember his name, mister?" excitedly inquired the boy.

"Jacobo!" replied the venerable man, pronouncing the word in the Spanish fashion, "Ha-ko-po!"

Not understanding that Jacobo was the Spanish of James, our hero shook his head, saying:

"Stiffen me if I ain't worse puzzled than ever. We ain't had no one in our family named Ha-ko-po!" then, despairing of getting any more information from the worthy padre, thanked the latter and withdrew to the dining-saloon, where he ate a hearty meal.

Owing to contrary winds and weak engines, it took the steamer four days to reach Los Angeles, and when Jim landed he was in a high fever.

Chin-foo conveyed him to a hotel, but the pro-

prietor refused to receive him, so, finally, the Chinaman hired a small furnished house, and engaged a doctor; a native who spoke as much Spanish as English.

Luckily he understood Californian fevers.

First, in spite of Jim's feeble resistance, he shaved his head, next he bled him, and last of all, gave him a dose of stuff that smelt strong enough to lift him on to his feet.

Poor Jim stood it all, and within a week was able to sit up and growl.

"Here's a derned nice scarecrow you've bin and made of me!" he snarled, as he surveyed his features in a mirror. "Stiffen me ef I ain't a regular bald-headed parrot. All my beautiful raven locks, that Violetta used to dote on, slaughtered like a lot of goods at an auction."

"Mucho bueno," observed the doctor. "You more cool now."

"But dern it," groaned Jim, "I'm so disguised that Uncle Sam will have reason to say I ain't myself."

"Who is your Honguil Sam?" demanded the doctor.

"Sam Bags," snarled Jim. "He's stole seventeen millions worth of my property. No wonder I've had a roastin' fever; why, up to Espinosa, there, I found he'd been having a nice old game with my estate. Stiffen me, it's enough to make a feller bald-headed."

As he said this he passed his hand over his shaven pate, then smiled at his own speech.

"You plentee baldee now," grinned Chin-foo.

"Your hair vill soon grow, you get von vig, hey?" said the doctor, adding: "I knew a *caballero* named Bags; he lived out in San Roche, I attended him."

"Whatsort of a man was he?" demanded Jim, who immediately became much interested. "Do you know that I begin to think that the embalmed corpse they passed off on to my mother wasn't my pop at all?"

The doctor felt his pulse, as though he feared that our hero had suddenly had a relapse and was not in his right senses, but found it as regular as a clock, so he replied:

"Vat sort of a man was Don Jacobo? Vy, he vas an old fellow, eighty. Caramba! he vos un diablo."

"Eighty and a devil!" gasped Jim; "then he weren't my pop; he would only have been fifty had he lived till now."

"Your grandfather, vas he?" suggested the doctor. "Vot vas your pro-shee-nitor's name?"

The Californian had been educated in a San Francisco college, and loved big English words.

"Progenitor" was too much for Jim, but not wishing to show his ignorance of the word, he said:

"Oh, we're decent folks—my family; we ain't had no pro-shee-nitors in our crowd."

"Caramba," smilingly exclaimed the doctor.

"Ve all haf prosheenitors."

"Well, you greasers may," muttered Jim; "but stiffen me if we've had any in our family. We're clean folks," adding in a louder tone.

"Well, my father's name was Jim, an' my gran'father's name was Jim, an' my name is Jim—Highfalutin Jim they call me; but we ain't had nary a Jacobo or a prosheenor in our lot. Do you take us fer Jews?"

Once more the puzzled doctor felt Jim's pulse, but it did not denote that the boy was feverish, so he said:

"If you vish to go to Don Jacobo's rancho you must wait. There is dreadful news from dat place; the Chinese laborers have rebelled against the new caballero and have committed shocking things. He and a senorita, who is said to be his sister, is a prisoner in his own house."

"Rah," cried Jim, "we'll nick him now."

"But it isn't safe to go near the place," urged the doctor. "No vite man is allowed vithin five leagues of the rancho."

"So much the better," shouted the excited boy; "hurrah. Stiffen me, I'm going for him. I'm bound to fetch him somehow. If I can't do it as a white man, I'll dye myself yaller."

"Take my advice," urged the Californian. "Wait until the state troops come down, then you can go in safety."

"All right," chuckled Jim, "how much do I owe you, doctor?"

"Fifty dollars," said the gentleman.

Jim paid him, and when the medical man had departed, said to Chin-foo:

"Can you make a Chinaman of me, Chin?"

The latter thought a minute, then replied:

"High-yaw; s'pose mi buy some saffron (saffron) makee washee—washee you facee, you all samee color me. Me makee one taillee, sew him insidee you Chineee hat; dress you all same me; den, by dam, you Chinaman."

The necessary articles were procured, also a

wig like our hero's natural hair, and two days afterwards, Jim, dressed and colored like a Chinnee, was on his way to the scene of the revolt, Chin-foo riding behind him, and murmuring:

"He bellee good Chinaman; he fetchee um somehow."

CHAPTER XXXV.

AN ADVENTURE WITH A B'AR.

ROLLED up in a blanket, lashed behind the saddle of Jim's horse, were a suit of clothes, his ordinary ones, his wig and various small articles, including a bundle of segars.

The San Roche rancho was seventy miles from Los Angeles, and, on the first night of their journey, Jim and his man Friday camped out, never dreaming of danger.

Now it so happened that a party of ranchemen had been in the mountains bear hunting, and had captured a young cub, which they had endeavored to convey to Los Angeles, but the little cuss, which was exceedingly tame, had given them the go by, and was wandering about in the vineyards and orange groves.

The night was cold, almost inclined to chilliness, and our hero had wrapped his blanket well about him; Chin-foo, reclining near by, snorting like a locomotive.

The noise attracted the cub, and, descending a tree, the animal shambled towards Jim, stopping on his way to sniff at the Chinaman, then poking its cold nose into the boy's face.

Jim was dreaming of Violetta, and thought that he was about to give her a kiss, when the bear's touch half awakened him, and, freeing his arms from the blanket, he stretched himself, murmuring:

"How awful froggy your nose is, Violetta," then turned over, at the same time leaving an opening into which the cub nestled, and, liking the warmth, presently fell asleep.

The critter's belly was so full of grapes that it was perfectly gorged, while the cold caused it to sleep like a top.

At daybreak Chin-foo aroused, yawned and sat up, exclaiming:

"Too muchee color," then turning towards Jim, observed, in a lower tone: "High-yaw, Mistee Bagee, swellée too muchee, how can do?"

As he spoke, the bear aroused, thrust out its muzzle and winked lazily, as much as to say:

"Holloo! cold, isn't it?"

"Mi—damee!" breathed Chin-foo. "How can do? What piecee black nigeree you, hey?"

Aroused by the cub's stretching itself, and scratching him, our hero turned about, and catching sight of his bed-fellow, ejaculated:

"Stiffen me, what's that? Who are you, hey?" at the same time fetching the critter a stinging blow on the nose.

In lieu of showing fight, the cub curled itself up in Jim's blanket and grunted like a sulky hog, while the boy arose, and gaping at Chin-foo, exclaimed:

"What the blazes is it? Stiffen me, hev I bin sleeping with the derned thing?"

"Blackee pige," suggested the Chinaman, fingering the trigger of his rifle. "Me shootee he."

"Yer sister's a black pig," sneered Jim. "It's all over hair."

"One peecee blackee devilee," said Chin-foo. "S'pose me-freee?"

"Hum—hum—hum!" grunted the cub, curling up more closely than ever, and scared out of its senses.

"Hold hard!" cried Jim, catching sight of the bear's fur.

"It's a b'ar. 'Rah! we'll have a b'ar hunt," saying which, he took a corner of the blanket and endeavored to shake the animal out of its refuge, while Chin-foo, who was by no means anxious to face the "strange demon," screeched:

"Stopee—stopee! Leavee be! Knockee he on he headee," but our hero would not listen to any such unsportsman-like proceeding, and continued to tug at the blanket, while the cub, now thoroughly maddened, snarled and snapped like a bull-dog.

It was not very big, weighing, perhaps, sixty pounds; so Jim was able to sling him around in a lively style and presently succeeded in chucking it out of its envelope, landing it at Chin-foo's feet, and causing that worthy to yell like a Crow Indian.

For an instant the bear seemed bewildered, but after sucking its paw, it rushed at the Chinaman, and inserting its sharp teeth in the man's baggy breeches, endeavored to grab at

him with its outstretched claws, whereupon Chin-foo got, dragging the cub behind him, as a dog does a tin kettle that has been tied to its tail.

"Ha—ha—ha-a! Haw—haw—haw!" roared Jim. "Stiffen me! if this ain't a derved lark! It's as good as a circus!" while poor Chin-foo scooted and yelled.

"Oh, me! oh-h-m-e-e! Ouph!" when luckily for him, the basement of his breeches gave way and he parted company with his "tow," leaving the latter seated upon its rump, chewing the nankeen trophy it had captured.

"What a derved high old racket," panted Jim, as the cub, after savagely destroying its prize, began to lick its paws. "Stiffen me, if—"

Here he paused, for the bear was sniffing in his direction.

"Guess I'd best shewt you, right away," saying which he stooped, and was picking up his rifle, when the cub gave a snarl, set up its hair, like a mad wild cat does, and dropping upon all fours, rushed savagely upon him.

"Gosh!" he ejaculated, rising and making for the nearest tree—an orange—the trunk of which at a short distance from the ground, was studded with big thorns.

"He—he—he!" cackled Chin-foo, who was securely ensconced among the branches of a young live oak. "You catchee fum-fum dis time, Mistee Jimmee."

Our hero shinned up the orange tree, until he reached the thorns, when he paused, and we regret to be obliged to record it, cussed.

The armed points stuck out all around the stem like a glory around a saint's head, while the bear was grunting, snarling and ascending the tree after him.

Luckily the critter was too much blown with its gymnastics to move very rapidly.

"Here, you derved Chin!" yelled our hero, turning his affrightened face in the direction of the grinding Chinaman, "git down out of that an' shewt this cussed brute, hear?"

The man quickly descended, and seizing his rifle, aimed at the cub's heart, fired and killed it, the little beast dropping as dead as a stone.

Jim slid from his elevated position, drew a Chinese knife from his girdle, and thrust it into the hole made by Chin-foo's bullet, then drawing forth the bloody weapon, cried:

"'Rah! I know'd I'd fetch it somehow."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

JIM MEETS WITH A CHINESE CLERGYMAN.

As they were building a fire, in order to cook their b'ar meat, a Chinaman approached.

He was tall, thin, browned, withered-looking cuss, apparently about a hundred years old, though really not more than seventy.

To Jim's astonishment he had no tail or queue.

"He's as bald-headed as I am!" muttered our hero, while Chin-foo advanced, and kneeling before the new-comer, knocked his head nine times, then arose and began an animated conversation.

"Wish I could chin Chinese!" thought Jim; "how they do sling the words around, dern it! It seems easy enough!" then addressing Chin-foo observed: "What's the old bummer got to say for himself?"

"He bonze!" (priest) said Chin. "He no bummer?"

"A bronze, is he?" chuckled the boy; "well, he do look rather coppery. I've heard of all sorts of folks, but a bronze man knocks Jim!"

"You no savy!" grinned Chin-foo; "he what you callee peecee minister, all samee Beecher!"

"Who told you about Henry Ward Beecher?" chuckled the boy.

"Me savvey?" winked Chin-foo. "Me one tim (time) lib 'long Melican lady. She say Beecher Melican galer joss!"

"You're darned smart!" laughingly answered Jim. "S'pose you call your minister bronzes because they rake in money—hey?"

"No rake in money from Chin-foo," said the other. "Me makee my own joss-pidgeon" (said his own prayer); with which he turned to the stranger and offered him some rice out of a bag secured to his saddle-bow.

The bonze accepted the grain, which he proceeded to boil in an earthen pot, while Jim's man cooked some b'ar meat, and set out biscuit, butter, and a tin of sardines.

Chinese bonzes, or priests, as a rule, do not eat animal food—living upon the rice and fruit contributed by their congregations.

Of course there are exceptions to this, but they are rare.

"Won't Brother Beech take a sardine?" said Jim, as they began their breakfast—the bonze yoffleing his rice out of his bowl with two round ivory sticks.

"He no wanchee fishee, meatee, fowlee!" said Chin-foo. "He atee licee (rice), flutee (fruit), all dem tingee!"

"How," gasped our hero, drawing away from the old man; "why, what a derved nasty skunk he must be!"

Chin-foo chuckled, then said,

"You no savvey me. Me no mean all same you mean; me mean boilee licee all same dat," pointing to the cooked rice.

"Oh!" smilingly answered the boy, "I didn't think that a minister would lower himself so far. Stiffen me, I un'stan'. Licee means rice. Well, what do you call them other things? You seem to rather like 'em about you," alluding to certain parasites usually found on all common Chinese.

"Oh!" laughingly returned Chin-foo, "me savvey. Me callee lowtze; he bellee goodee. S'pose me hab, me wellee—s'pose me no hab, me sickee."

Jim looked disgusted, then, after regarding the bonze awhile, observed:

"Guess your minister, here, must hev pooty good health—hey?"

"Hi-yaw," grinned Chin-foo. "He numba one; he lib here ten yeearee."

"Ask him if he knew Jacobo Bags," demanded Jim, lighting a cigar.

Chin-foo said something to the old man, who nodded, then launched out into a long description, during which he became wonderfully animated, constantly repeating, in a bitter tone:

"Samee Bagee, damee."

Knowing that it was useless to stop him, our hero let the old boy chin away, until finally he simmered down, and merely jerked out short sentences, stopping, at last, with a fierce exclamation, as though swearing.

"Here, Brother Beech," said Jim, "take a cigar," tossing the bonze a weed, which the old fellow caught as dexterously as an organ-grinder's monkey does a cent. This made the boy laugh.

"He talkee big talkee," said Chin-foo, whispering as though afraid to let the bonze hear. "He say Samee come here play hellee—burn down Joss' housee—buildee churchee—makee Chinaman allee same leleggen (religion), he the bellee badee."

"Wewgh," whistled Jim; "I un'stan' now. Dern his old skin—the hypocrite. He's seen the Chinaman shell out to their Joss, so he thought he'd make a little something by converting

them. Stiffen me, if that ain't Uncle Sam all over. Why, he changed from Baptist to Methodist because the latter wanted a new church built, an' he thought he'd get the contract; an' since I've knowed him he's been converted eleven times."

"No savvey," said Chin-foo, who was puzzled with Jim's speech. "Bonze bellee good man—say Sam drivee he'way—bellee he killee he, spose he stop topsidee la (there on the rancho). Now Chinaman hab catchee Samee—hab catchee—big peecee, Missee Johnson—hab gib bonze all chits (papers) dey findee."

"Chits!" cried Jim. "Ask him where they are. Tell him I'm James Bags, Esquire, the real owner of the San Roche estates. Stick it inter him, Chin. Tell him if he gives me them papers I'll make him a present of a thousand dollars and send him home to his wife. Them's my bonds."

"He no catchee wiffee," chuckled Chin-foo, to whom the idea was mighty comical, Buddhist bonzes never marrying.

"Well, his young woman or his old un," laughed the boy. "He's ray-ther tough, though, ain't he, to get hitched? Anyhow, tell him I'll pay him handsomely if he hands me them documents."

A long chat ensued between Chin-foo and the bonze, Jim listening and constantly hearing his own name mentionen.

At length Chin said:

"He say s'pose you go catchee Samee an' oloo piecee gallee (Mrs. Johnson); s'pose you takee he way—stop all bobbalee (trouble)—no shootee Chinaman, he gib you papers."

"I'll do it," cried our hero, extending his hand to the bonze, and adding in an undertone: "Jes' fancy highfalutin' Jim Bags having to depend on a low-tze old bum like this; but I've got to get at my fortune somehow."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

MARCHING ON TO SAN ROCHE.

FINDING that the bonze was likely to prove a valuable aid, and guessing rightly enough, that the papers referred to were Sam's United States bonds, Jim produced a small bottle of whiskey, carried for medicinal purposes, and offered the old man a drink.

Like a true vegetarian, the bonze smiled.

He loved his rye; it was his only vice.

Declining to join, as Jim never drank spirits unless as physic, our hero aided by Chin-foo, proceeded to question the patriarch, who gradually became communicative, and informed them that the rebellious Chinese laborers had cut down all the orange trees and vines on San Roche, and were endeavoring to starve Sam into coming to their terms.

"Why, they've ruined my property," growled Jim.

"Sam has," said Chin-foo; "he made Chinamen madee, he do all badee ting."

Little by little the whole story came out, how the old man, Jacob Bags, had died, how Sam and the lawyers came and took possession, and how the new heir had endeavored to squeeze the dollars out of and force his religion into the coolies.

"Now," said the bonze, in Chinese, taking another "two fingers" of old rye, "if you can persuade Sam to give up all idea of punishing the men who have revolted, and will make out discharge papers for each of them, releasing them from engagements, so as they can go and work where they like, I'll give you your documents."

"Where do you keep them?" demanded Jim, through his interpreter.

The old man actually wrinkled up one eye and winked, then said:

"I've stowed them away in a safe place up in the San Bernardino Mountains. You'll have to go with me to get them."

"Do you think that I can trust Brother Beech?" whispered Jim to Chin-foo, as the later translated the bonze's reply.

Chin answered that he would pledge his life on the word of the bonze, adding, that Chinese priests never lie.

Jim laughed at this, saying:

"Is that so? Wish some of our ministers would copy from 'em," then proposed to march, observing: "Won't old Beech get tight if he sucks down too much of that rye?" but, on Chin-foo assuring him that the bonze could stand considerable liquor, he mounted his horse and rode forward, Chin and the priest following on the animal.

After riding for an hour they arrived at a boundary stone marked:

"SAN ROCHE,
"J. B."

"That stands for Jim Bags," said our hero, triumphantly pointing to the letters. "See, Chin-foo, here's where my land begins," then, glancing ahead he saw that the orange trees were all ringed—cut round about a foot from the ground—and that the tops were dead.

On they rode past acres and acres of ruined orange groves and drying vines.

About noon they reached a village, or collection of bamboo huts, from which swarmed out a troop of disorganized coolies, armed with all sorts of weapons from a revolver to a garden rake.

Jim surveyed them, murmuring:

"Stiffen me! they are a hard-looking crowd, but I guess that Brother Beech has got them well in hand. Nothing like a minister to boss a gang of such cut-throats; he can scare 'em when no one else moves 'em worth a cent; give 'em hell and brimstone, that knocks 'em."

Dismounting, the bonze made them a long speech, after which they all knocked their heads on the ground before him and Jim.

"All litee," whispered Chin-foo. "Now we go on to big peecee housee. Samee dere, you can catchee he."

Further on they came to a vineyard, every tree of which was cut down, and the fruit turning to raisins on the withered branches.

This made him feel mad, but he knew that it would not do to say anything before the bonze, who was chattering like a parrot with Chin-foo.

Suddenly the latter halted and told Jim that the old man said it would be best for him to assume his own costume, and to show his firearms, as, if he went in disguise, the coolies might not believe that he was the rightful owner of the rancho—so he dismounted, and, putting on his wig, resumed his proper attire, then, remounting, exclaimed:

"Highfalutin' Jim is himself again."

His "lightning shift" caused the bonze to laugh, whereupon he whispered to Chin-foo:

"Say, ain't old Beech tight?"

"He no getee tightee," grinned Chin. "He too smart."

On they started, some of the Chinese marching ahead playing upon a sort of bagpipes, making a noise that almost set Jim's teeth on edge; however, the idea of being boss of the crowd so pleased him that he straightened up and pretended to like the music.

At length they arrived in sight of the mansion, an imposing-looking building, painted white, situated on a hill between two mountain ranges that stretched away for miles, until they were lost in the snow-covered peaks of the San Bernardino.

Here they were saluted by the wild shouts of about five hundred coolies, who were evidently keeping strict watch over the house.

Halting his horse, Jim pointed to the building, and cried:

"My property! I hereby take possession of this estate. I"—when the bonze shrieked something to him, and Chin-foo, turning, said:

"Mistee Jim—he says you shutee up, light away."

Whereupon our hero did as he was directed, muttering:

"All right—your party's in now. Wait till I get into the White House."

The bonze addressed the guards, making quite a long speech, at the end of which all the Chinese came forward and chin-chinned (knocked heads) before Jim, who thereupon winked at his man, saying:

"See, Chin—they've acknowledged me. I knowed I'd fetch 'em somehow."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

OUR HERO HAS HIS UNCLE TO RIGHTS.

JIM was one of those peculiar people who accept everything done for them as a matter of course, and boss those that seek to serve them right away.

"Where's my beloved Uncle Sammy?" he cried. "He ain't escaped, has he?"

This was duly translated by Chin-foo, and our hero was assured that he would find Sam at home, the coolie leader adding, in Chinese:

"He's been nicely cooked for your dinner."

"What's he say?" demanded the boy.

The observation was translated, whereupon he asked what it meant.

The coolies laughed among themselves, and pointed to the parlor of the house, from the open windows of which proceeded thin clouds of blue smoke.

"Stiffen me!" he said. "You ain't bin an' roasted my dear uncle, have you?"

"He say," chuckled Chin-foo, translating something that the boss coolie whispered in his ear, "he say Samee Bagee 'long big piecee Missee Johnson talkee-talkee too muchee—no gib he flee (free) paper, so he makee big heapee firee, make loostee he."

"Here!" shouted Jim, whose manly nature was aroused at the idea of cooking a woman; "stand clear, you Chinamen;" then putting spurs to his horse, he dashed up to the house.

"Oh—oh!" he heard Mrs. Johnson moan. "Oh! I'm cooking."

"Owch!" he heard Sam yell. "I'm done brown as far as the knees. Oh! this is awful, ain't it?"

Entering the parlor—a fine, large room—he beheld a sight that made him both angry and amused.

On the mahogany center-table was laid a big sheet of iron, placed on which was a large iron cooking-pot piled up with live charcoal that glowed like a furnace, while suspended over it, by a rope that was secured to the cross-beams above, were his dear uncle and Mrs. Johnson, tied back to back, and revolving as a joint does when strung to cook before an open, old-fashioned grate.

Neither of them had observed his entrance; so when he spoke both gave a start, Jim crying:

"Halloo! Uncle Sammy! Said I'd fetch you somehow, didn't I?" Then, pulling away the table, he mounted a chair, and, bidding Mrs. Johnson hold on to a rope that was dangling before her, began to cut her adrift from Sam, leaving the latter suspended as before.

It was a tough job lowering the old girl, so he had to call in Chin-foo and the boss coolie, with whose aid he succeeded in landing her.

"Oh! Mr. What's-er-name," she panted, "where's the troops?"

"Mr. Jim Bags, marm," he politely replied. "You ought to know me—Highfalutin' Jim. I'm engaged to marry your adopted grandchild. I'm the gentleman you tried to have killed."

"Where's the United States troops?" she puffed, fanning herself with her hands, and pretending not to know him.

"I'm the troops, Mrs. J," chuckled Jim. "I've come to save you from being roasted on the half-shell, like a saddle-rock hister. Ain't you awful glad to see me?"

"Oh! Jim, let me down," moaned Sam.

Glancing up, our hero saw that his relative was not suffering much, as the coolies padded his arms before securing them to the stake by which he was suspended, so the boy thought he'd allow him to hang awhile.

"Let you down, Uncle Sam—not much," he cried. "You're such a slippery dodger that I can't trust you. I'm going to to pay you off for all you've done to me;" then turning to Chin-foo, winked, and said: "Pile on the charcoal an' shove the masheen under uncle—he ain't half crisp yet!"

"My God!" yelled Sam. "Do you mean to murder me? Do you mean to burn your own flesh and blood—your uncle who brought you up?"

Of course Jim was only guying him; but after all the wretch had done, thought he would scare him a little, so he shouted to Chin-foo:

"Come, don't stand gawpin' at me; slam on the charcoal an' go ahead with the cookery. We'll have a nice feed on my beloved uncle, now we've got him."

"Oh, owch! ya-woup!" screamed the cur, who thought that Jim was in earnest. "My dear James—my beloved nephew—oh, don't be such a brute as to roast an' eat me! I'll give you everything that belongs to you. I'm sorry that I yielded to temptation—it was my first crime."

"Well, it's going to be your last," grinned Jim, who could not avoid smiling. "We're going to roast you, an' bile Mother Johnson."

Hearing this, Mrs. J. pretended to faint, keeping one eye on the door, ready to bolt when an opportunity offered; however, the place was too well guarded.

"Jim," solemnly began Sam, terror-stricken by seeing Chin-foo and the boss coolie, who were piling more charcoal on the fire, "Jim, do yew believe in a futur' state?"

"Oh, wipe off your chin!" said the young scamp. "I'm come to see you about this 'state. What do you mean by robbing me?"

"Let me down an' I'll own clean up," pleaded Sam, eying the charcoal askance. "I kean't confess up here, my mind's all in a jumble."

"Then I shall go ahead with the dinner," said Jim, stamping his foot and winking at Chin-foo. "Ain't that charcoal all on yet? Come, hurry up—make it hot for him."

The two men grasped the table and were pretending to be about to push it under him, when Sam yelled:

"Sto-op! I'll confess! Jim, your grandfather—the original old Jim Bags, Jacobo as they calls him here—whom I turned out of doors soon after your father started for this state, somehow wandered out here, regained his health an' became a wealthy man. A few months ago he died an' left you all his money and real estate. Jim, the devil put it inter my head to kill you, an' so inherit all the property. I've failed, an—"

"Lower him down," chuckled Jim. "We'll postpone his roasting!" then, as Sam was releas-

ed, added: "Dern you, I knowed I fetch you somehow!"

CHAPTER XXXIX.

SAM FREES THE COOLIES.

ALTHOUGH beaten, Sam had no idea of really giving up his property.

He meant to fool Jim with promises, and, when they reached San Francisco, to accuse him of aiding the Chinese and with having obtained a confession from him through fear; but our hero was too smart to trust him.

"Le'me shake hands with yew, James?" he said, after rubbing himself awhile. "I'm a penitent man, James; I wish to do the right thing by yew. Yew hear that, don't yew, Mrs. Johnson?"

"No, sir," she snapped; "I hear no such weak confessions. He said he'd *bile* me! He's a nice brute, he is."

"Come to think of it," chuckled Jim, by way of joke, "*you'd* be nice *broiled*. S'pose I order you to be cooked for dinner?" whereupon she grew scared, and said:

"I—I was only *joking*, Mister James. How is dear Violetta?"

"You're a nice old duck to joke," grinned the boy. "Sung-soon related one of your little rackets. Do you know that you are wanted in San Francisco?"

"Me?" she cried.

"Yea," he replied, nodding as he spoke, "you're wanted to answer to a charge of conspiring to assassinate James Bags, Esquire, the millionaire;" then turning to his uncle, who was eying the gaping coolies, he said: "Come, my dear, loving, devoted, self-sacrificing relative, what are you going to do about it, hey?"

"Have you any power over these wretches?" demanded Sam.

"No," laughingly answered Jim, adding: "But I know a feller who has."

"I wish to get out of this," said Sam.

"So do I," chuckled his nephew, "but we're in a hole."

"Now," inquired Sam, "if you can command them sufficiently to prevent their attempting to kill you, I'm sure you can get them to let me go. I've acknowledged you."

"When they allowed me to come to your rescue," said Jim, winking at Chin-foo, who was drinking in every word, "they told me they were all bound to you for a certain number of years; that you had paid the Five Companies a large sum for their services, but gave them nothing. Is that so?"

"Ye-a," said Sam, "I hired five hundred of them that way, the rest I pay wages to, or, at least, I have agreed to."

"How much did you give the Five Companies?" hotly inquired Jim. "'Pears to me you've bin chucking my money around anyhow."

"Twenty-five thousand dollars," said Sam. "I thought you was dead?"

"No fault of yours that I wasn't," chuckled our hero. "Well, we'll settle that by-and-by. I've promised these men that you'd give them papers of release, and guarantee that you won't prosecute them for damaging my property, un-'stan'?"

Every coolie engaged from the Five Companies is provided with a printed certificate, on the back of which is an endorsement, which in the event of his employer releasing him, is signed in the presence of a notary public, who, thereupon, stamps it, after which the man is free.

Chin-foo handed one of these documents to Jim and explained this, and the boss coolie said that Don Jose Barras, the gentleman who owned the next rancho to San Roche, was a notary.

Taking a sheet of paper, Jim wrote as follows:

"SAN ROCHE RANCHO, 18—

"SEN. DON JOSE BARRAS:—Will you please come over here and help us out. Bring your notary's stamp. Your obliged friend,

"JAMES BAGS.

"Rightful owner of San Roche."

This was delivered to the boss coolie, who immediately dispatched it, by a short route, to Don Jose; meantime the house servants, who were free men, returned to their duties and prepared a free lunch, while the other coolies cleared away the charcoal, straightened the room and removed all traces of the hanging.

Sam wanted the notary to see the latter, but Jim said:

"Oh, let bygones be bygones!" whereupon Mrs. Johnson snapped:

"I can be your witness, Mr. Bags. He threatened to bile me."

"Scuse me," laughed our hero, "you forget that you're wanted in San Francisco."

Mrs. Johnson shut up.

Sam had no idea that the coolies had broken into his baggage and looted his bonds; he merely imagined that in giving up to Jim he would have to relinquish his claim to the almost ruined estate; his plan being to marry Mrs. Johnson and go to Europe, leaving his nephew hopelessly burdened with a lawsuit, as the land could not be lawfully the lad's until Sam had signed a release, which he mentally swore never to do.

When they had concluded the meal, Don Jose arrived, and turned out to be an American lawyer.

Sam wished to have a private interview with him, but the don refused, saying:

"I believe that this young man," pointing to Jim, "is the the lawful heir of the late Don Jacobo."

"I never knew that my grandfather's name was Jacobo, until lately," observed Jim, turning to his uncle. "You always said it was Jim."

"Jacobco is the Spanish for James," laughingly observed the lawyer; then, addressing Sam, asked whether he wished to release the indentured coolies from their engagements, adding: "They are now quiet and under control of their leaders. I would not advise you to arouse them again."

The bonze, who was seated before the crowd, had this translated to him, and seemed pleased.

"Well," drawled Sam, "s'pose I must do it," thereupon as each Chinaman advanced, he signed their discharge, which the lawyer attested and returned it to its joyful owner.

"This is all out of *yewr* estate," he sneered, glancing at Jim.

"I'm willing," chuckled the boy. "I've got to take something out of your head yet."

In two hours every coolie had vanished, leaving Sam, Mrs. Johnson, the lawyer, Jim, Chin-foo and the bonze.

"Now," said Sam, to Mrs. Johnson, "we'll take our baggage and return to San Francisco."

Highfalutin Jim smiled, saying:

"Where's my bonds, uncle? I ain't fetched them yet."

CHAPTER XL.

SAM GETS WHAT HE RICHLY DESERVES.

UPON going to the room in which he had left his trunks, Sam found that the latter had been opened and his securities removed.

"My good land!" he screamed, tearing at his hair and clawing his face like a lunatic. "I'm ruined! oh, I'm ruined!" then, turning savagely upon Jim, cried: "You've stole them! You're a thief!"

"Oh, git out," calmly answered our hero. "I ain't got 'em yet, but, you bet, I'm bound to fetch 'em somehow."

"Is this your nephew?" demanded Don Jose, of the frantic man.

"No!" shouted Sam. "He ain't! He's an impostor! I can prove it by a telegram."

"But you've acknowledged him by your acts," interposed the lawyer. "You can't go back on yourself like that."

"I don't care a continental," moaned Sam, "all creation shan't make me acknowledge the blamed purp. I'm going to fight, I am."

"All right, Uncle Sammy," grinned Jim. "I'll take you at your word."

Drawing the boy aside, the lawyer said:

"I presume that you are the youth to whom Senor Don Jacobo, otherwise the late James Bags, bequeathed his wealth?"

"Look at these papers," replied Jim, handing him the certificates signed by the good folks of Bagsville. "Strong & Quick say I'm O. K."

"Deacon Provis never put his name to that?" snarled Sam, who was listening with ears, nose and mouth.

"He did," chuckled his nephew. "There's his name; you can see it for yourself."

"You lie!" snapped his uncle, whereupon Jim quietly remarked:

"I'll make you swaller that. Thief and liar are good titles for you."

The lawyer carefully read the documents, also the newspaper accounts, after which he observed:

"These seem all correct; the statements are rather highfalutin', though."

"I'm Highfalutin' Jim," laughingly replied our hero. "You musn't expect me to give bald-headed facts like other folks. Guess them certificates proves who I am. If Mrs. Johnson will retire I'll show my strawberry mark."

The lawyer thought awhile, then said:

"I'll ride to Los Angeles, and bring a policeman here with a warrant to arrest your uncle. He's like a mule, he can't keep the estate, and he won't let you have it."

"Wait a bit," said Jim; "I'd like five minutes' chat with him. Let me take him aside, and give him a littl' gentle advice. I'm bound to fetch him somehow."

"Hand me your weapons, then," said Don Jose. "You're rather hot tempered, and I do not intend to permit you to hurt him. I'm one of your guardians, under your grandfather's will, and must look after you."

"All right," laughed the boy, producing his revolvers and knife, and unslinging his rifle; "there's my stock of hardware."

"You've no other weapons about you—on your honor?" demanded the don.

"No, sir," chuckled Jim, "all the arms I now carry are these," exhibiting his fists.

Going to Sam, who was engaged in earnest conversation with Mrs. Johnson, the don inquired if he would agree to talk matters over with his nephew.

"Yes," said the wretch, meaning to make a final attempt upon Jim's life. "But I protest agin his being my nephew."

"Hand over your weapons."

"I have none," sulkily answered Sam. "Them alfred coolies cleaned me out."

"Upon your honor?" sternly asked the lawyer.

Sam nodded.

"Go into the reception-room, then," said the don. "We will walk down to the stables, leaving you free to chat! Mr. Bags, if you take my advice, you will sign an unconditional release, and will transfer this estate and the one at Es-

pinosa to your nephew—else I shall arrest you for fraud."

"He ain't my nephew," growled Sam; "he's an impostor."

"Kim along, nunky dear," laughingly observed our hero; "I've been longing for this moment," adding in an undertone: "My eye—I feel like a morning star—if I don't warm you mor'n that charcoal did, my name ain't Highfalutin Jim Bags, Esquire."

As Sam passed Mrs. Johnson, she slipped a sharp, strongly-made pair of scissors into his hand.

Jim noticed this, but did not say anything.

Chin-foo and the bonze were eating their evening meal, in the cook-house, at some distance from the dining-room, so there was no danger of their overhearing what passed between the relatives.

"This way, senora!" said the lawyer, offering his arm to Mrs. Johnson, which she accepted; then, glancing meaningly at Sam, walked off with the don.

"Well," snarled Jim's relative, "what are you going to do about it?"

"I can't talk here," grinned our hero. "Come into this room an' let's lock the door."

Concealing the scissors in his right hand, Sam followed, and when Jim had turned his key, removed it from the lock and tossed it out of the window, he once more snarled:

"Well, what are you going to do about it?"

The apartment was destitute of furniture, the latter having been removed and burnt by the coolies, while the iron-barred windows prevented any escape for either of the occupants.

"Hand over the scissors," quietly demanded Jim, picking up a stout iron crowbar that had been dropped by one of the mob. "Come, hand them over or chuck them out of the winder, or I'll mash you in a raw poultice."

Uttering a curse, Sam threw the scissors from him, whereupon his nephew picked them up and tossed them through the window bars, sending the bar after them; then, turning to his uncle, he drew off his coat, and rolling up his sleeves, cried:

"Ha-ha! I've got you at last!" after which he let drive with his right and left, and gave Sam two awful black eyes, shouting:

"That's fur the licking yer gave me in New York, an' fur trying to kill me! I'd like Sal Combs to see you now!"

Ere Sam could recover Jim piled in again, doubling him up with a stomach-acher, and landing him on the floor, after which he danced around and around him, crying:

"That's fur trying ter stick me the night I arrived in California—unstan'? Curse yer mean skin—I told yer I'd fetch you somehow!"

CHAPTER XLI.

EXIT SAM BAGS.

"MURDER!" roared Sam. "Murder!"

"Yes—murder—it was!" excitedly exclaimed his nephew, as he danced around him. "Git up, you unnatural dog—you! Git up! I ain't given you half of what I mean to. I've bin lookin' forward to this! Come, stan' up an' take it."

Sam knew that he was in a desperate strait, and that Jim had youth, muscle and a heap of wrongs in his favor, so he arose, and, rushing to the window, yelled:

"Mur-der—mur-der!" when the excited boy danced up to him, got in his fists ding-dong, one-two, and sent him reeling like a drunken man; as he did so, crowing like a rooster and crying:

"Dern you, that's for trying to bounce me and for cheating me out of my seventeen millions!" after which he let him have it until Sam sank all in a lump on the floor and lay like one dead.

Walking rapidly around his now vanquished foe, Jim said:

"Told you I'd fetch you, somehow, didn't I? Told you I'd do it, blame you?" when he heard the don's voice, saying:

"Have you settled horses, yet?"

"No!" chuckled our hero, advancing to the window. "We ain't settled hosses, but here's a half-dead jackass that wants removing!"

Then, in a quick, excited speech, narrated how Sam had secreted the scissors, to which articles he pointed in proof of his assertion.

Picking up the key, the lawyer unlocked the door and entered; Mrs. Johnson following him and upbraiding Jim for the way in which he had pommelled his uncle.

Sam was carried into the parlor and restored to consciousness, whereupon Jim said to the woman, who had never ceased to abuse him:

"Oh, stow your chin, marm! I ain't given him one quarter of what he give me! I've only taken ten per cent. out of his blamed old hide!"

To the astonishment of the lawyer, Sam agreed to go to Los Angeles, and to acknowledge Jim as his nephew, adding:

"I'll sign back the estate, and give up the game. If I don't, I know he'll kill me!"

The next day they started for Los Angeles, and upon their arrival, Sam kept his word, then embarked with Jim, Don Jose, Chin-foo, and the bonze, for San Francisco; the lawyer, as one of the boy's guardians, guaranteeing Sam's immunity from imprisonment for his attempts upon Jim's life and fortune.

As they were steaming along the coast, the don said to our hero:

"Why do you bring that old Chinese priest with you? He's a dirty cuss!"

"What, Brother Beech?" chuckled the boy. "Oh, he's a ripper!"

"Why do you call him Brother Beech?" demanded the lawyer.

"Because he's so cute an' smart!" answered Jim, adding, with a merry laugh: "I believe that his real name is Low-tze!"

He was a deal too well posted to tell the don, or anyone else, that the old man was the guardian of the missing treasure.

Upon arriving at San Francisco, McKillick & Burroughs endeavored to persuade Sam to deny what he had said, but he was too much afraid of his nephew to come any such game, and on the third day Captain Von Skimmeldecken and Don Jose Barras, as Jim's guardians, recovered the estates from the rascal's clutches and told the boy that he was worth at least, even with the trees cut down, half a million of dollars.

"Say," said our hero, as his relative prepared to quit, "how much money did them coolies steal from your trunks?"

Sam glanced triumphantly at him, then hissed:

"Find out! They burnt the bonds and gold notes. You haven't recovered much. By the time you sell half your land to replant the other half, you won't be worth a quarter of what I received."

"No," laughed the boy. "See here, you're wrong. I know where the treasure is hidden, dern you."

Sam uttered a cry of rage and rushed out of the apartment, rejoining his beloved chum, Mrs. Johnson, to whom he was married in Los Ange-

les, after which they quitted it for the east *via* Panama. Jim never set eyes on them again.

"You did not tell me that you knew where the money was?" observed the don.

"I haven't got it yet," said Jim, adding with a wink, "if McKillick & Burroughs had known of it they would never have allowed Uncle Sam to sign them papers."

"That's so," said the don. "Well, you are a smart boy, but you are not indulging in one of your highfalutin' yarns, are you?"

Jim grinned, saying:

"No; there's no highfalutin' about this story."

Chin-foo behaved splendidly, and kept the old bonze half tight all the time, so the secret never leaked out.

No one suspected that the dirty old Chinaman knew what he did, and when Jim was certain that McKillick and Burroughs had been paid, and had relinquished all claim against his estate, he made up his mind to go in search of the missing bonds, etc.

During the time he had been in San Francisco he had daily seen Violetta, who, upon every occasion, had looked more beautiful, but as she seemed to still believe that he highfaluted, he refrained from revealing his secret to her.

"Violetta," he observed, one morning, "I am going on a journey, maybe I shall have considerable difficulty in doing what I intend."

"Where are you bound for, dear Jim?" she said. "You won't run into any danger, will you?"

"No!" he replied. "I've settled uncle's hash, an' I don't think I have any enemies here."

"How about Sung-soon?" she pleaded.

"Oh, he's sent up as a suspicious character," laughed the boy. "I guess I shall come out all right."

"Tell me what you are going for, Jim?" she coaxed.

"Well," he whispered, kissing her good-by, "if you must know, Violetta, I'm going after them United States bonds and gold notes that uncle hooked, and," here he smiled, "I'm bound to fetch 'em somehow."

CHAPTER XLII.

SAD RESULTS OF A CHINESE SING-SONG.

It was on a lovely morning in February that Jim, Chin-foo, the bonze, and the segar pedler started, per steamer, for Los Angeles.

Our hero had secured the freedom of the segar man, who had been detained as a witness against Sung-soon, and, as the poor fellow had lost his all through being imprisoned, and was a smart, strong coolie, Jim had engaged him. He knew that he could trust Chin-foo, and preferred not to have any Americans in his party.

From what the old bonze let drop, the boy believed that their only danger would be from wild animals, but it will seen that they had as much to dread from man as beast.

"I'll recover my bonds," thought Jim, "then I'll hunt around for Violetta's pop, an' when he's found, will make her Mrs. J. B. I ain't got much more to do."

Upon arriving at Los Angeles, they visited Don Jose Barras.

Then, after looking in at the San Roche rancho, started for the San Bernardino mountains.

Jim had not told his guardian where he was going.

On the third day they were obliged to corral

their horses, as the road became too steep for animals, and that night, when they camped, Jim decided to *cache* all but weapons and blankets, of course, each carrying a few pounds of bread and some salt.

As they sat by the camp-fire, our hero said to Chin-foo:

"Ask Brother Beech how much further we have to go."

This being translated, the old man replied in Chinese, which Chin-foo rendered into English, thus:

"He say: 'Dontee you be damee hurry. Vellee long way yettee,'" adding: "he say, 's'pose you likee he sing song?'"

"All right," nodded Jim. "Ask him if he can give us a comic one. He's derved funny, he is."

"No wanchee foolee he," cautiously answered Chin. "S'pose he get madee, him wilo," (go back.)

"Well, this is gettin' blamed monotonous, stiffen me if it ain't," muttered the boy. "Go ahead with yer circus. I'm ready to hear anything. Git yer steam up, boys."

"Me sing, too," suggested Chin-foo.

"Howl away," nodded Jim; "anything for a change, as the monkey said, when he cut off his tail."

The bonze and Chin-foo started on a Chinese hymn containing about a hundred verses, which they squawked like human parrots—the segar man joining in the chorus, and evidently enjoying the row.

"How do you like it?" asked Chin, as he wiped the sweat from his brow and lighted a segar. "He nomba one, eh?"

"Well," chuckled our hero, "it's like red pepper, a small quantity of it goes a long way." He little imagined the truth of his words.

"Me givee you some moree sing-song?" inquired the obliging fellow. "Me savee nomba one sing-song, callee: *No-si-hong-too-he-no-halo-kio?*" (The song of the five million spirit bird or lark).

"Well," grinned Jim, "if it won't strain Brother Beech's throat, I don't mind your ripping out a couple of dozen verses, but, don't bust yerselves; we've got some tall climbing to do to-morrow."

Chin-foo blushed and smiled, not understanding his master's chaff; then, after jabbering awhile with the segar man and priest, started a screech that fairly set poor Jim's teeth on edge; the other Chinamen jumping in and joining with all the vigor of two revivalists.

All of a sudden, four rough-looking men appeared in their midst and one of the rowdies shouted:

"Say, Johnnie, ef you don't stop that blawsted noise we'll come down an' clar you out, har? You've scar'd our wimmen to death;" then, noticing Jim, they drew their revolvers and bade him surrender, adding: "Hallow, stranger, what you doin' up har?"

"I'm traveling to see the country," said our hero, as they advanced and seized him, while, as may be imagined, the Chinese had ceased their howling and were quietly regarding the new-comers.

Knowing that it would be useless to resist, the boy submitted and was presently secured by having his hands tied behind his back, then told to march after his captors.

To his astonishment they did not attempt to molest his attendants.

They were outlaws from Santa Barbara and Los Angeles, and were dependent upon the Chinese to bring them prisoners and letters.

As usual, Jim checked his captors, saying:

"What sort of treatment is this, anyhow? I wonder you ain't ashamed to tie a poor little orphan's hands behind his back! I don't call you men, stiffen me if I do."

Chin-foo and the segar man had remained behind, but the bonze calmly followed Jim.

After climbing for half an hour they arrived at a cavern, and entering it, found a large party of men and women, who were dancing to the sound of a hand-organ played by a grizzled old Italian.

Of course the music ceased and Jim became the center

of attraction, while the bonze, mingling with the Chinese present, entered into a low conversation with one of the latter.

"Here is the captain," said one of his captors, introducing our hero to a tall, handsome scoundrel, who evidently bossed the gang.

"We've met before," calmly observed the man.

"Possibly," quietly retorted Jim. "Well, what do you want with me?"

"I'm the gentleman who entered the car you were in on the Pacific Railway," said the fellow. "Dern you, you gave me cheek, didn't you? What are you doing up here, hey?"

Jim looked him straight in the eye, then said:

"Ain't they hanged you yet?" hearing which the crowd roared with laughter; but this angered the bandit, who uttered a low oath, and replied:

"*Caramba!* no, my young millionaire; but you can say your prayers, for," here he laughed significantly, "I mean to string you up at daybreak to-morrow;" after which, turning to the organ-grinder, he said, in Spanish: "Go ahead with the music, Senor Maspoli."

"Maspoli?" thought Jim, not troubling himself in the least about the bandit's threat. "I wonder if that dirty old bummer is Violetta's father?"

CHAPTER XLIII.

VIOLETTA'S LONG-LOST FATHER FOUND.

THE idea of his future wife's parent being that grimy, wrinkled, highly-perfumed old organ-grinder was not over pleasing to Highfalutin' Jim, who had imagined that, at least, the senor was a nobleman, if not a king or an emperor.

He forgot that pretty flowers often grow on ugly plants, and that you cannot tell a lord by his coat.

After the first dance was over, he said to the boss bandit:

"Look here, as you intend stringing me up to-morrow morning, you may as well let me enjoy myself now. I'd like to join in the festival hop."

His sauce so amused the company that they petitioned their leader to release him, which was reluctantly granted.

Now the ruffian had never really intended to hang Jim, as such a proceeding would have caused a row among the women bandits.

Shooting a man, or a dozen, in a fight, was one thing, but hanging a mere boy in cold blood was quite another.

"He'll make one of us!" thought the chief, who believed that he could scare our hero into joining the band.

He did not know Jim.

Among the women was a dark-eyed girl, who reminded the boy of Violetta; so, when they released him, he advanced to her, and making a low bow, said:

"Low me the honor of dancing the next waltz with you?"

The young lady laughed, then replied:

"Yes," whereupon he took his place by her side.

"You're a cool one," she observed. "Joaquin don't seem to have frightened you worth mentiontng."

"Bless you, no, miss," he replied. "I've been drowned, shot, stabbed, murdered, netted and assaulted too often to care a red about such a trifling thing as hanging."

"Ain't you highfalutin'?" she laughed. "You don't imagine that I swallow all that, hey?"

"Highfalutin' I am called," he grinned; "a thing of which I brags; my Christian name is Jimmy, an' I'm known as H. J. Bags."

"You can sling poetry," she laughingly remarked. "I think you're payin' dirt—a regular heeler."

"You bet I am," winked Jim. "Say, when is the moosic going to begin? I want a dance to shake the cramp out of me, they tied me so tightly."

"Senor Maspoli is having a drink," she answered. "Poor old man—he's crazy."

"He looks as though a little soap and water would be healthy for him," said Jim, as they promenaded about the cave.

"Poor old man," sighed the girl, who, though she was a bandit's daughter, was really a good creature. "He's cracked over the loss of a little girl, who was stolen from him in Italy. We don't believe he'll ever find her."

"Stiffen me!" ejaculated our hero. "It must be Violetta's pop."

"Who is Violetta?" sharply demanded his companion, who was somewhat mashed on him.

Jim briefly explained his engagement prospects, at which the girl did not seem over pleased.

"Don't you think she's just splendid?" he said.

"I—I was in hopes that you were—single," faltered his partner. "I'm sick of living up here, among this crowd, and I won't marry one of them."

"Sorry I can't oblige you," he quietly returned. "I'm so dead gone on Violetta that I can't change."

"Who asked you to?" she laughingly retorted. "I think you're well named, Highfalutin' Jim. You've got a nerve—you have! Now, look here, I'm going to run away with you."

"But—Violetta?" nervously observed our hero.

"Oh, I'll fix her?" replied the girl.

"But I don't want her fixed," snapped Jim, in an undertone. "I ain't in love with you. I like you, but

"Sh, don't be a fool," she whispered: "I'm going to quit this with you, understand? I'm miserable here. Joaquin wants to marry me and I hate him, he's a bully and a cur. I shall tell the gang that I'm gone on you and you must say that you'll marry me, then they'll let us go, to-morrow; Joe Joaquin dasn't resist them; my parents are both dead, and the band are my friends, comprehend? You must do as I ask you."

"But, stiffen me," murmured Jim, "I can't marry two orphans!"

"Caramba!" she hissed; "I don't want to marry you, it's only a blind to enable me to shake the gang; I'm just as proud as you are. Come, say you'll agree or I'll set Joaquin on to you, and you shall never see your dear Violetta."

"I agree," he whispered, adding to himself, "I'll fetch her, somehow."

The organ-grinder returned from a mysterious part of the cave, where the bandits kept their whiskey, then seating himself at the instrument, began to reel off "The Beautiful Blue Danube," waltz, whereupon Jim and his partner cut in, and were soon sailing away in the mazy dance.

When they were tired, the girl bade him see old Maspoli while she told the women what she meant to do.

"Mind," she hissed. "You'll swear that you'll marry me?"

"All right!" he breathed, adding in an undertone: "Stiffen Jim if he will, though."

The dancing was over for the night and the organist was covering his instrument with a green flannel ulster.

The old man was gummy-eyed, smelt of garlic like a skunk does of its peculiar odor, and was in every way unlike Violetta.

Seating himself beside him, Jim said:

"Yer play der old masheen well, mister."

"Me play goot," he sadly replied, in a sort of polyglot language. "Si—ja—yers—but I not fine me leetle gal. Ach Ceo—I soon die, den I not see her—*pauvra Viola*. Me valk all over Amerique—*mon Dieu*—I no find her," with which he wept.

"Well, 'sposin' you was to?" demanded our hero, who was moved by the old man's tears. "You wouldn't want

her to go bumming 'round the country singing an' playing the tamborine to yer old masheen; hey?"

"No—no!" cried the old fellow. "No—no. Me got goot house—plenty money—in Italy."

"Stiffen me," murmured Jim, "it's her pop. I knowed I'd fetch him somehow," then, to the astonishment of Maspoli, he told him of Violetta.

CHAPTER XLIV.

JIM IS REQUESTED TO CLEAR OUT.

As the mouth of the cave was strictly guarded, Joaquin did not trouble himself about Jim, and presently the gang, one by one, retired to their respective dormitories, the place being full of small cells that served them as rooms, and in a little time Jim and the old man were left alone.

At first Maspoli could scarcely credit his senses, and it was not until the boy had minutely described Violetta that the old fellow would really believe him.

Falling upon his knees, Maspoli prayed silently; then, rising, returned to his seat by the side of our hero, and begged him to once more relate his story.

Jim ran over it again, after which he demanded:

"You call her *Viola*—the paper says *Violetta*?"

In his broken English Maspoli related the sad history. Fifteen years before, when he was a prosperous goldsmith in Milan, he had lost a lovely baby girl, who was stolen from her cradle, and for years, spite of all that he did, he had never been able to discover the least trace of her.

Time passed, while his wife, worn out with sorrow, had fallen into a consumption, and on her death bed had a vision that her *Viola* was alive, and was in America.

Maspoli believing this to be a mere dream—the result of his wife's sickness—had contented himself with advertising in the American papers, but nothing came of it; indeed, it was more than probable that the money he paid for the notices was never forwarded to New York.

His wife died, and two years passed, when one morning he received the following note:

"SENOR GIOVANNO MASPOLI:—I am dying, but by the direction of my confessor, hereby make the following atonement for the wrong I have done you. I loved you, and when you married Violetta Doria, swore to be avenged. It was I who stole your child. I gave her to a woman named Tambuvini, who sent her to the United States of America. I die, begging your forgiveness for my great sin. MARIE DUVAL."

"Why does she call your wife Violetta?" said Jim, who was much touched by the recital.

"Me have lif in France," replied the old man, "and it vas dere me made ze acquaintance of Marie, whom me promised to marry, but fearing zat my parents would not approve, me quitted Paris in a hurry, and returned to Milan. Marie hunted me out, but upon finding zat me vas marry, disappeared again. Me did not for von moment tink it vas she who had abducted my leetle Viola. Ach, boy, nevere deceive a voman!"

"But why, in her confession, does she call Viola, Violetta?" persisted Jim. "Dern these foreign languages, they twist names about anyhow—turn Jim into Jacobo."

"Vell, you see," answered the old man, "me had a vay of calling my vife Violetta—Marie thinking zat vas her name, made a meestake."

"I like Violetta best," said Jim; "Viola sounds like a fiddle, you know," adding, "how did you come to take to organ-grinding? Why did you not employ detectives?"

"Detec-tifs?" contemptuously replied the other, snapping his fingers backwards, in the Italian fashion. "Baba—dey does noting. Me spend—tousands dollars, dey learns noting—so I buy dis organ. I vander—vander—vander—all over America, den me come to California—someting tell me she—here."

"I see," nodded Jim. "You're like me—you're bound

to fetch her, somehow. Well, I'm in a hole; I've got to promise the dark-eyed miss—here—before all the crowd—that I'll marry her!" with which he related what the girl had done.

Maspoli looked grave, saying:

"Dis mixes tings—awful. Vell, me plan some zings."

"Yea!" nodded Jim. "It is a little muddled. Guess I'll leave it to you."

"Joaquin big scoundrel," observed the old man. "He sees me in Los Angeles an' bring me here to find my leetle gal. She no dis place—*pauvre Viola*."

"Well, he's put you on the right track," chuckled Jim. "I want to serve the girl here, but—stiffen me—I don't mean to marry her."

"Me no see how you get out of it," mumbled Maspoli, in a drowsy tone, adding, "you leave to me—me—me."

In a short time the old man slumbered.

"Dern it," chuckled Jim, "I've talked him to sleep."

As he uttered these words Joaquin came out of the far end of the cave, and approaching him, said:

"Hist!"

"Well?" demanded the boy, "what are you histin' about?"

"Do you want your liberty?" demanded the bandit, who had heard of the girl's plan to get away with his prisoner, and knew that he could not prevent it.

"None of your she-nan-ny-gen," cried Jim.

"Honor," solemnly returned Joaquin.

"Didn't know you was troubled with that complaint," thought the boy, then observed, aloud: "Well, what is it?"

"I want you to git out of this?" whispered Joaquin.

"Stiffen me," chuckled our hero. "I didn't ask you to bring me here. I'm willing to go, at daylight."

"I want you to c'lar, right away," said the robber. "Here's all your things, that I took from you," handing him his arms, *etcetera*. "Now you just git, and don't come within ten miles of this place again, hear?"

Jim took his arms, then said, as he buckled on his belt:

"Are you going to put up milestones? How am I to know that I'm ten miles away from your old shebang?"

The bandit swore between his teeth, and replied:

"Now you git. Your Chinaman is waiting below with a lantern, and we'll show you the way. Dern you, you beat all for cheek I ever come across."

"I sha'n't go unless my future father-in-law goes with me," calmly answered Jim, pointing to Maspoli.

"All right," growled Joaquin; "he can go, but you must leave his organ behind. We can't do without our music."

Jim awoke the old Italian, who sat up, rubbed his eyes, and said, winking at our hero:

"Leave me organ, oh, no;" then nudging Jim, whispered: "All right, you go; me come by-and-by."

In another minute the boy was clear of the cave, and was following the bonze down the mountain side.

CHAPTER XLV.

IN WHICH JIM IS INTRODUCED TO A BIG CAT.

"I WONDER what future father-in-law is up to?" thought our hero, as he followed the bonze, who evidently knew the way. "He must be blamed fond of his old organ. I don't understand it."

The Chinese in California have, outside the cities, few regular priests, and are spiritually cared for by wandering bonzes, like the one who had fallen in with Jim, and as these men travel all over the country, they know the routes, and are at home everywhere.

It did not take the boy and his guide long to reach Chin-foo and the cigar man, who, rousing out of their sleep, nodded, as though Jim had only been away for an evening call, then sank back upon their blankets and went to sleep, the lad and bonze following their example.

The sun was high in the sky ere they awoke, and after

partaking of some refreshment, the party set out, carefully avoiding Joaquin's cave.

All that day, and the next and next, they toiled on, slowly working their way up the mountains until they reached a level plain, covered with short grass, where they rested in order to take supper.

As the bonze had stated, and Chin-foo translated, they had come a very long way.

"How much further have we to tramp?" inquired Jim.

"Belle littee," replied the Chinaman. "He say you catchee molla mornin'!"

As they sat around their camp-fire, Jim thought of old Maspoli, wondering why on earth the organ-grinder had not quitted the cave with him.

"Shall me gib you one peecee sing-song?" suggested Chin-foo, who noticed that his boss looked wearied.

"Not this evening," grinned the boy. "My stummick won't stand it; besides, we don't want to bring another crowd of bums on to us!"

"S'pose me go leetee way offee, sing-song?" said the man. "Bonze say allee ploppa (proper), sing-song dis piecee nightee?"

"Oh, if you want to indulge in any Chinese prayer-meetin' biz," said Jim, "I don't care so long as you go away some distance."

Chin-foo guessed what he meant; and, rising, walked away, followed by the bonze and the cigar-man.

When they were at some distance from him they commenced a wild song—evidently some sort of a hymn, the priest indulging in quavers, shakes, and squeals, that rose and fell on the still air most comically, while Jim mused, and gazing into the fire, murmured:

"Blamed if them Lowtze Chinese ain't queer kind of ducks! Stiffen me! guess they think them's hymns. Now, I call 'em howls."

Suddenly he heard an awful yell, and then another, after which the noise ceased.

"Meetin's over," he chuckled, lighting a fresh cigar.

"Well, everybody to their taste; but give me a Sunday-school or a prayin' band."

Scarcely had he uttered this sentence when Chin-foo rushed up, shouting:

"Big piecee cat! Catchee bonze! Hilo—hilo!" (come—come).

Springing to his feet, Jim cried:

"Where?"

"Hilo—hilo!" excitedly continued Chin, seizing his rifle and darting back, Jim following him like a deer.

The moon was just rising, and they could see everything pretty clearly.

Presently they neared a group consisting of two Chinamen and a jaguar, or Californian tiger.

One of the men—the bonze—was under the animal and had folded himself up like a jack-knife, or a scared crab, while the other was hanging on to the beast's tail.

The jaguar was in a quandary; whenever it moved the segar man gave its spine a yank, so it was standing like a statue, over the priest, growling like a big cat.

"Now for it," thought Jim; "I'll show 'em how to kill a tiger," then, leveling his rifle, fired, hitting the animal, which, maddened with the pain, uttered a roar, gave a terrific bound and landed at the boy's feet, dragging the segar man after it as easily as a dog does a tin can.

Jim clubbed his rifle and fetched the beast a lick over the skull, but in another second found himself on his back with the jaguar's face close to his.

Spite of all his blowing and bounce, Highfalutin' Jim was no cur, and, even when in that awful position, his sense of humor did not desert him, for muttering:

"I'll fetch you somehow, dern you!" he drew his revolver with his right hand, and, cocking it, fired point-blank into the monster's face.

Blinded by the flash and stung by the ball, which en-

tered its left eye, the creature retreated, backing like an angry kitten.

As it did so, our hero raised himself upon his left elbow and blazed away at the jaguar, when a lucky shot from Chin-foo's rifle laid the creature low and silenced it forever.

"There!" cried the boy, springing to his feet and discharging his rifle into the animal's body. "Highfalutin's the one to kill tigers! Knowed I fetch it somehow," with which he turned to the grinning Chin-foo and bade him skin his prize, as he wanted the trophy to place at Violetta's feet.

Many of the "mighty hunters" that we meet are not half as good as Highfalutin' Jim.

The bonze unclasped himself and looked on, while Chin-foo and the segar man removed the jaguar's pelt; the old man muttering in Chinese:

"I never touch dead animals but wouldn't mind a drink of whiskey," which was duly given him.

The next morning they packed up the dry skin and started for the hidden treasure.

About noon they halted, and the bonze, raising a stone from the ground, pointed to heap of neatly-folded old newspapers, laid in a hole beneath, then said in English:

"Dammee!"

Jim turned them over with his rifle, and in a disgusted tone, observed:

"I never swear, but I say dammee too! Jim's fetched this pop—why, they're nothing but old newspapers."

CHAPTER XLVI.

A SAUCY LETTER FROM THE BANDIT'S GIRL.

"STIFFEN me!" muttered Jim, as he turned over the packages, each of which was securely tied with a string, "if this ain't a derved sell. Come all this way to find out that Uncle Sam has jocked me."

"Dammee," winked the bonze, as though wondering what made him look so sour."

"Oh, you needn't show off yer English," cried our hero. "You've sucked me in nicely. Don't you know an old newspaper from a U. S. bond, hey?"

This was translated to the old fellow, who, therefore went:

"He—he—he!" then said to Chin-foo, "*no—halo—seho—quang—so—che—seea!* Dammee!"

"That won't bring my bills back," growled Jim, while Chin-foo stooped, picked up one of the newspapers, and untying it, opened out its folds and exhibited, nicely stowed away between the pages, a United States' thousand dollar bond; seeing which, Jim joyously cried:

"Rah! I knowed I fetch 'em somehow! Give Brother Beech a drink; he's a bully boy, is old Low-tze!" then dropping upon his hands and knees, he began to gather the remaining packages, laughing and shouting like a lunatic.

His Uncle Sam had thought that the Chinese coolies had taken the newspapers for what they appeared on their face, and had used them as kindling.

The hole proved to be deep, and soon our hero had a big pile of valuable parcels by his side.

"Rah!" he cried, "I'll send you home, Chin, an' I'll build Brother Beech a hum-box, at San Roche! He sha'n't go loafing 'round the country any more. I'll provide for him—hear?"

"How you callee hum-boxee?" said the delighted Chin.

"Joss-house! That's what I mean by hum-box!" replied the boy. "Tell him that I'll buy him a red and yaller Joss, with all the latest improvements—clockwork inside to make his eyes roll, an' to move its hands—savvey! I'll set him up with a hull wax-work show, an' make his everlasting fortune!"

This was duly translated to the old priest, who laughed

and said something, which Jim insisted that Chin-foo should translate.

Chin hung fire for awhile, then said: "He say you allee samee—litte he-haw! He no wanchee vaxee-vorkee! He wanchee Joss-house, he catchee Joss!"

"Hee haw!" muttered Jim. "Guess he means that I'm a great big donkey! Well—he intends to be civil, I know! I'll give him a testimonial—a bar'l of old rye—calculate that's the sort of Joss to warm his rough soul—he never smiles unless he has a bottle afore him!"

When all the packages were removed from the hole, Jim divided them into four lots and bade his attendants each take one in his knapsack, after which he filled his own and they resumed their homeward march, it being far easier walking on the down grade than they had found it on the up.

"I like these Chinese," he thought. "Now they know that these bonds are money, but they don't try to knock me on the head an' to rob me, as Uncle Sammy did."

"You wanchee sing-song?" said the smiling Chin-foo, when they camped.

"Nary a sing!" hurriedly returned Jim, thoroughly alarmed by the proposition. "Thunderation, don't go holdin' no fort now in Chine. We've got the papers O. K., an' don't want to let folks an' things know where we are—savvey? If Brother Beech feels like singing, tell him to sit on his old safety-valve until we get out of these mountains—unstan?"

Chin-foo laughed, saying:

"You no likee Chine moosic. Sposee me sing-song you no seemee likee, hey?"

"Jis so!" chuckled our hero. "My stummick an' ears ain't made ov cast steel."

"Chineemans likee Chine music," said Chin, who evidently pitied Jim's want of appreciation. "He say *bellee goodee*."

"American no like it," laughingly returned the boy; "he say *bellee achee!*" then, as the good-tempered man joined in the merriment, added: "See here, Chin, you've brought man and beast down on us by your sing-song; now, cheese it. A devil may come the next time!"

The Chinaman nodded his head; and they had no music that night. Chin evidently had a wholesome dread of devils.

On the third morning they reached the spot where they had left their horses, and to their astonishment found them gone.

"Derved funny!" ejaculated Jim. "Guess Joaquin's hooked 'em."

"Peachee chit dere!" said Chin-foo, pointing to a note stuck in the fork of a tree.

Our hero secured the epistle, which he opened, and read as follows:

"MR. BAGS:—I have quitted the gang, in company with old Maspoli; and we have borrowed your horses, as you would not, I am sure, wish me to walk to Los Angeles. I shall send the old man back for his machine, which he has hidden—he's in a fearful stew about it.

"Now look here, young man—don't for a moment imagine that I care a pin about you. I want you to understand that I'm a freeborn Californian, and that I would not marry a Yankee to save him from hanging. Anyhow, you're too homely-looking for me, and so you needn't ever think of me again.

"Go and marry your old organ gal, that's what you can do, you deceitful man; don't ever think I cared for you. Remaining ever your affectionate friend,

"JUANITA PARDO."

Jim chuckled when he read this.

"Watee he say?" demanded Chin-foo.

Our hero explained that Maspoli and the girl had taken the horses and had gone on, adding:

"She's mashed on me, Chin; she says I am the hand-

somest, bravest, best, strongest, most wonderful young man she ever saw!"

Chin thought for awhile, then muttered in an audible voice:

"She one big foolee, talked allee samee so! She highfalute gallee."

"Dern it!" chuckled Jim. "I didn't highfalute that time worth a cent. I begin to think that plain facts are the best."

They camped there three days, and during that time several Chinese went by, all of them bearing marks of ill-usage, and Chin-foo told his boss that there was danger on the road.

CHAPTER XLVII.

ATTACKED BY WHITE DEVILS.

THE Chinamen who had told Chin-Foo their stories, had evidently been shamefully abused, some having lost a nose, while others had their ears cropped, and a number were badly bruised and severely beaten. All had lost their queues or tails, and reported that they had been attacked by a gang of San Francisco hoodlums.

Their recitals had considerably scared Jim's crowd, but our hero had only smiled.

The young wretches who had committed the atrocities were a gang of boys expelled from 'Frisco on account of their violence to the Chinese, and who had traveled on foot as far as the Tejon Pass, where they were camped, and from which place they made their raids upon the surrounding country.

As they confined their attacks to the inoffensive coolies, they contrived to live without using firearms, it being almost impossible for them to obtain ammunition.

Armed with long Chinese knives, these young desperadoes would surround a peaceful Chinaman, then overpower and often murder him; their deeds giving them a name among the coolies synonymous with "The Hundred White Devils."

"You see," smilingly observed Jim to Chin-Foo, "it was lucky that I put a stopper on your singing; you might have drawn the crowd down on us."

The man shuddered.

On the evening of the third day, Maspoli, leading five horses, rode into the camp.

Jim welcomed him, then demanded:

"Say, why have you brought an extra horse?"

Taking him aside, the Italian explained that the Hundred White Devils were out, and that he had brought wigs and American clothes for the Chinese, and a spare horse upon which to carry his organ, adding, in a whisper: "That his daughter's fortune was stowed inside the instrument."

"Oh, I see," ejaculated Jim. "Now I know why you were so anxious to keep the old machine with you," saying which he told him about the bonds.

The organ-grinder listened, then said that it would be wisest for them to carry the treasure in two feed-bags, one on each side of the led horse, and that he would place his money, which was likewise in United States bonds, with Jim's, informing the latter that the hoodlums were out in great force, and would probably attack them.

"What will you do with the organ?" demanded our hero.

"Send it up to Joaquin," said Maspoli. "He was real mad pecos I would take it away. Dat pay him for takin' de gal."

The bonds were duly transferred to the sacks, and feed was put in all the packages, which were covered with the jaguar skin, the bonze volunteering to carry the organ to Joaquin, and to return by daybreak.

He was a wonderfully tough old rooster, and seemed to be able to do without sleep.

At eight A. M. the next morning, Jim gave the Chinese the American clothes that Maspoli had brought, and Chin-

foo, the bonze, and the segar man shed their national costume, and rigged out in the safer garments, after which they put on their wigs, buckled their pistol belts, slung their rifles over their shoulders, and awaited the order to mount.

"Tell 'em," said our hero, addressing his man, "tell 'em to keep close to us, an', in the event of a muss, to do as I do, and to use their pistols only in close quarters, or when they have passed the enemy. Tell 'em that they're commanded by Highfalutin' Jim Bags, Esquire, who has never been beaten, and that, as for these confounded Hundred White Devils, we're going to fetch 'em somehow."

"Brava—brava!" cried the old Italian, after which, throwing his arms about Jim's neck, he embraced him, saying: "Oh, *mia Jacopo!*" whereupon our hero gently pushed him off and quietly observed:

"My name is Jim—future father-in-law; savvy? not Ya-ko-po!" Then bade his party mount and follow him, which they did, in this order:

Maspoli, armed to the teeth.

Jim, leading spare horse, with treasure,

Chin-foo, well-armed.

The bonze and cigar man.

The latter being provided with rifles and revolvers.

Upon reaching the plains, which extended as far as the eye could see, they spurred their horses, and by sunset entered a ravine leading to San Roche, where they halted.

No one slept much that night, for they felt that there was danger in the air.

At sunrise they partook of a hasty meal; then, pistol in hand, rode into the ravine.

It was the only route to San Roche, and the hoodlums knew it as well as the Chinese.

Their path was a narrow one between two high cliffs, while on their left ran a swift, deep river—in fact, they were in a miniature canyon.

Not a word was spoken, and, save the noise of the horses' feet, they did not make any sound.

Suddenly, in turning a head in the ravine, they rode into the gang of young cut-throats, ranging in age from ten to eighteen years, each of whom carried a big, sharp knife.

Yelling like a pack of wolves, the wretches swarmed about the riders, who, firing alternately to their right and left, set spurs to their horses and dashed through the crowd.

The little devils fought with a courage and desperation worthy of a better cause, and though the horses galloped at full speed, they kept up with them and repeatedly drove their knives into the poor animals' bodies.

Nerved to a state of perfect fury, the riders swerved their horses around, and trampled the young scoundrels under foot, then, led by Jim, who shouted like a mad man: "Give it to 'em, dern 'em!" wheeled and rode at the crowd, crushing some and forcing others into the river, which quickly swept their bodies out of sight.

The struggle that followed was desperate, as the hoodlums were five to one; but finally, Jim seeing they were utterly disorganized, set spurs to his horse, and tightening the leading rein of his led steed, cried:

"Hilo—hilo!" after which he dashed down the ravine at full gallop, followed by Maspoli and the Chinese, who had behaved splendidly.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

BROTHER BEECH PROVES TO BE A TREASURE.

JIM'S attack so discomfited "The Hundred White Devds" that the remains of the crowd cleared out to Lower California and New Mexico, where their operations

were opposed in a less highfalutin' manner than that employed by our hero.

They said that they didn't mind being shot at by Americans, but when a lot of heathen Chinese, dressed up as their countrymen, had whipped them so badly, they thought it time to deny their citizenship and to turn "greaser."

After they had left the young scoundrels well behind, Jim asked about the bandit's girl, and was told by Maspoli that she had gone on to Los Angeles. They reached San Roche, where they halted, and our hero examined his find, which counted up as follows:

Two hundred thousand dollars, in United States Government bonds; twenty-five thousand dollars, in bonds of City of San Francisco; twenty-five thousand and odd dollars in U. S. gold notes—as good as the metal itself.

In all amounting to over two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

"Ven you marries mia Viola, me give her fifty thousand dolla more!" said the Italian, while Jim murmured:

"I'd rather you'd wash yourself an' buy some clothes."

The old man's quick ears caught this, and he said:

"You vait—you vait, Jeeims."

Proceeding on to the ranche of Don Jose Barras, they rested a few days, and Jim handed his bonds, etc., over to his guardian, who gave him a receipt for them and placed the packages in a secret safe, built in the wall of his bedroom.

"Before we go to 'Frisco," said our hero, "I'd like to ride over my property. I want to see what is to be done with it;" so mounting their horses, they proceeded to San Roche.

As they entered the first orange grove they espied Chin-foo and the bonze examining the ringed trees; the priest evidently understanding considerable about orange culture.

"What does Brother Beech say?" demanded Jim.

"What's he poking his old nose among the roots for, hey?"

"Chin-foo smiled, then replied:

"He say, s'pose you lettee he catch tousand Chinaman one monthee he cantee all tree down—so high," measuring about six inches from the ground; "den one yearee tree all grow 'gin, more bettee. He makee Chinaman makee tlootpicks (toothpicks) out dem tree, he cantee down—payee Chinaman bellee good—payee you bellee good."

"He's a regular Yankee, stiffen me if he ain't," laughed the boy. "What do you think, Don Barras, do you believe that these roots are alive?"

The lawyer examined several of the trees, then said:

"Yes; I think they are. If I were you I would accept his offer. I will confirm your decision and advance the funds. I have always heard that he is an honest man."

"Ask Brother Beech where he's going to get the Chinamen from," said Jim to Chin-foo.

The bonze declined to say, but asserted that, if Jim would sign a paper authorizing him to engage the men and promising to rebuild the burned Joss-house and to pay his coolies regularly, he would guarantee that they would work well and do all that he said.

"How about the vines?" demanded our hero.

"Oh, they are not hurt," said his guardian. "It has done them more good than harm to retard their growth. Well, will you agree to the old man's offer? It's a good one, for no one can manage the coolies as their priests can."

The contract was duly made out, in Chinese and English, and the old bonze, who said that his name was Hoo-lin, was established as Jim's overseer; he stipulated that he was to have entire control of the coolies.

"Tell him," whispered his employer to Chin-foo, "that I'll send him a barrel of the finest old rye he ever smiled over," when, to his astonishment, Chin replied:

"Hoo-lin say he no wantee oloo-lie—he swealee (swear)

off now he had Joss-house—savvey? He bigee—punkin—now."

Jim laughed, and promising to some day return and take up his abode at San Roche, left the bonze and the segar peddler, who was rewarded with a present of five hundred dollars, which Chin-foo took to convey to the segar man's wife.

A few days later, Highfalutin Jim Bags, his guardian, the lawyer, Senor Maspoli and Chin-foo started for San Francisco, via Los Angeles, taking our hero's bonds with him, for deposit in the vaults of the Bank of California.

He felt quite a man, did Jim, for he had fetched everybody and everything, somehow.

On the deck was stretched a jaguar skin, and he was never weary of recounting how he had killed the monster, while Chin-foo would grin, and say:

"Hi yaw, Mistee Jimmee Bagee, you numba one big shootee."

He was the same highfalutin' boy who had bounced and sauced his way in life, and his only trouble was that old Maspoli showed no disposition to wash himself.

"He's an awful grimy cuss for Violetta to kiss," murmured the merry fellow. "I shall have to employ some one to scrape and polish him."

When they reached San Francisco they all went to one hotel, where Jim was warmly welcomed, as he brought the house good custom.

Maspoli desired him to break the news of his discovery of Violetta and to ask her to dine with them that evening.

"'Scuse me," faltered our hero, as the Italian prepared to go out. "Would you do me a favor, future father-in-law?"

"Ah! twenty meelions," smilingly replied the dirty old man, smoothing his tobacco-stained, yellowish-white beard.

"Vot would me not do for you, Jee-hems?"

"You won't git mad?" demanded our hero.

"Ah, no," said the delighted old chap. "Me no mad viz you, Jee-hems."

Jim hum'd and hawed awhile, then whispered:

"Might I recommend a Turkish bath, future father-in-law?" adding:

"You ain't had any garlic to-day, neither, so I wouldn't if I were you, hey?"

Maspoli chuckled, then replied:

"Jee-hems, I'll fetch ze a baff zomehow!"

CHAPTER XLIX.

OUR HERO BECOMES A MILLIONAIRE.

REASSURED by the old man's promise, Jim set out to see his beloved Violetta, riding in a carriage as became James Bags, Esquire, owner of the San Roche and El Croix estates, to say nothing of the pile of United States and San Francisco city bonds, and a nice stack of gold notes.

"If it ain't seventeen millions now, I'll make it that sum, by-and-by!" he thought. "I ain't the only one who adds a few cyphers to their money!"

Upon arriving at the convent, he was shown into the parlor, and presently down came Violetta, looking too beautiful to describe.

"I'm so glad to see you, Jim, dear!" she said. "Where have you been, and why have you not written to me?"

"Well—you see, Violetta!" he smilingly replied, as he kissed her cherry lips, and seated her, "I haven't been in a postal district."

"Have you succeeded?" she demanded.

"Yea!" he said. "In everything!" adding: "You can marry me now, right away!"

"What?" she cried, starting up and uttering a cry of joy. "Have you discovered my dear papa?"

"Sit down, sit right down, Violetta dear," he said.

"Yes, I've found the old man, but, you must be prepared for a little disappointment. He ain't pertickler clean in

his person, but then you see he's bin an organ-grinder, and"—here he paused, for the poor girl had fainted.

Not wishing to alarm the sisters, our hero arose, and going to an aquarium that stood in the recess of one of the parlor windows, seized a pitcher that was placed on the table, and dipping it among the water plants, *etcetera*, rushed back and sprinkled some of the cool liquid over the girl's face.

Violetta soon revived, then smiling faintly, said:

"Water—give me a drink."

"Here's some in this pitcher!" he exclaimed, handing her the vessel.

The girl supped a mouthful, then spat it out, at the same time saying:

"My gracious! I believed I've swallowed something alive!"

Jim poked his nose into the pitcher and beheld several polly-wogs floating and writhing in the fluid, whereupon he calmly observed:

"It's only a kick-and-wriggle, Violetta! I've swallowed lots of 'em in Bagsville!"

"Oh, it's in my cheek!" she quickly answered, removing the lively creature and shuddering. "Isn't it a horrid, dirty thing?"

"If she objects to a nice, clean polly-wog," thought Jim, "what will she say to her pop? I hope the old buster will take a bath." Then, addressing her, said:

"You won't expect the old gentleman to be over nicely dressed, will you, Violetta?"

"Oh, take me to him. Do take me to him, dear Jim," she pleaded. "I wouldn't mind if he turned out to be a wild man of the woods. He's my father, you know. Remember how he has endeavored to find me. Oh, Jim, take me to him."

Unable to withstand this appeal, Jim consented to start right away, murmuring:

"Stiffen me if I believe you'll be able to stand his kissing you!"

"James," said Violetta, quietly placing her plump hand upon his shoulder, "what do you mean by stiffen me?"

Jim blushed, then replied:

"It's a saying of mine. One of my old highfalutin' ones."

"It is not a very pretty one for the owner of *seventeen millions of dollars* to use," she archly returned. "I want my Jim to be a gentleman. Promise me not to use it again?"

"*Stif*"—began our hero, intending to be very emphatic, then checking himself in time, said: "There, I won't use the expression again, Violetta," adding: "You'll wait for the *sixteen odd millions*, won't you? *I'll fetch 'em somehow.*"

She smiled and nodded, then merrily returned:

"I'll take you without a cent. Jim, you're just splendid."

"So are you," he warmly answered. "I know you'd love me, money or no money, but it's nice to have a little something in the bank."

Laughing, in her musical fashion, and making our hero wish to kiss her again, she ran off and presently returned dressed to go out with him.

"Why, I declare!" he cried, as they drove towards the hotel, "if it isn't nearly dinner time."

Alighting at the ladies' entrance he conducted her to their private parlor.

As they entered, a handsomely-dressed, silver-haired old man, whose beard was "whiter than the snow," arose and extending his arms, cried:

"Ah, *mia Viola!*" then, rushing towards them, clasped Violetta to his heart.

In his astonishment Jim did not see the pretty girl kiss the old man; all he could notice being the wonderful change in Maspoli's appearance.

In lieu of the snuffy, grimy organ-grinder, he beheld a handsome, venerable, scrupulously clean Italian gentleman.

We will draw a veil over the meeting of father and daughter.

It was perfect happiness for both.

Presently in came Don Barras and Captain Von Skimmeldecken and his wife, then followed introductions, smiles and exclamations of joy.

Chin-foo, who entered after the new-comers, seemed just as delighted as any one.

"Chin, old man," cried Jim, "I shall give you five thousand dollars and send you home by to-morrow's steamer. But for you I should never have recovered my property."

"All lilee," said the bewildered Chinaman. "I'm damee gladee go. Hi yaw," and the next day he started.

In due time our hero married Violetta, and sailed with her for Italy, in which sunny land they spent three years of happiness, then returned to California, where, under the care of Don Barras, the old bonze, and Captain Von Skimmeldecken, San Roche had once more become a most valuable estate.

Upon the day that he arrived of age, Jim and his wife, accompanied by a small edition of the former, visited San Francisco for the purpose of formally receiving his fortune at the hands of his guardians.

The old bonze was there, tough as ever, but handsomely dressed and *clean*, as became his wealth and position. Mrs. Sally Combs was also one of the party, having crossed the continent and taken charge of Jim's establishment as housekeeper, and the lawers, Messrs. Strong & Quick, were assembled to attend to the necessary legal formalities.

It was a proud day for our hero, and as he sat there, with his boy upon his knee and his lovely wife by his side, he felt that he had played a man's part in life.

"Say, guardians," he cried, as Don Barras, Captain Von Skimmeldecken and Senor Maspoli entered the room, "how much am I worth in money and real estate?"

"Over a *million of dollars*," said the lawyer.

Jim winked at his wife, and squeezing her hand, whispered:

"Said I'd fetch 'em somehow—didn't I?"

The happy woman smiled, and soon her husband was really a millionaire.

If any of our readers visit California they will possibly meet a tall, handsome American, who is known far and wide for his honesty and big talk, and whose name is always given as "Highfalutin' Jim Bags." We are sure that they will like him, and will not be long in his company before they hear his favorite phrase:

"*I'll fetch you somehow!*"

[THE END.]

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